



STUDIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH: EXPLORING REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

Social media has permeated every aspect of youth culture globally in the modern digital age, impacting their attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the complex effects of social media on young people, with a particular emphasis on how it affects academic performance, mental health, interpersonal relationships, and societal engagement. This study investigates the advantages and disadvantages of youth social media usage through an extensive literature review and empirical research. It looks at how social media platforms affect people's sense of self, how they form their identities, how they manage their emotions, and how they help people connect with others and build social support systems. The study also looks into the possible dangers of using social media excessively, including addiction, privacy issues, and cyberbullying. This research aims to educate parents, educators, and legislators about responsible and healthy online behavior promotion tactics for the younger generation by analyzing the dynamics of youth social media use.

Keywords: *Social media, online games, youth, digital literacy, social connectivity.*

INTRODUCTION

In social life, the two most essential things are entertainment and communication. Social media's explosive growth in popularity has completely changed how people connect, communicate, and obtain information in recent years. Young people are among the most important demographics using these platforms. They are frequently referred to as digital natives because they grew up in a world where social media is widely used. The emergence of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok, has significantly changed youth culture, influencing relationships, attitudes, and behaviors in previously unheard-of ways. The purpose of this study is to investigate the complex effects that social media has on young people, looking at how it affects social relationships, self-esteem, mental health, academic achievement, and civic engagement, among other areas of their lives. This study aims to shed light on the complexities surrounding young people's use of social media and the opportunities and problems these online communities present. In today's connected world, where online interactions frequently blur the lines between the virtual and the real, it is imperative to understand the dynamics of social media and its influence on youth. In light of the implications of social media for the growth and well-being of the next generation, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge already available on the subject. Social media can be defined in different ways. Social media is a website or application that allows users to instantly communicate, share content, and share feelings with others. In other words, social media is a technology-driven platform that allows its users to create virtual communities or artificial societies (Blogs, 2024b). Social media mostly depends on an internet connection or being online. Additionally, social media comes in a variety of forms. Some may be mobile application-based, while others are website-based. Social media merely makes communication easier between people. And which one might provide the option to view videos? For instance, users of the well-known social media platform "Facebook" can instantaneously communicate and share moments" (Hossain, 2022).

Social media means online community. That is, an app or website is considered a social media platform only when its content is created by its users. For example: Every post on Facebook is created by some user. Other users are also seeing it. YouTube has its users uploading videos and watching them again. But if that were the case, only YouTube authorities would upload videos to YouTube and we would only watch them. Then it could not be called a social media platform. That is, the basic concept of social media is sharing!



The term "social media" describes a range of technological tools that allow users to share information and ideas. Approximately 60% of the global population, or over 4.7 billion people, use social media, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X platform (formerly Twitter). Early in 2023, 94.8% of users visited websites and apps for chat and messaging, with social media platforms coming in second with 94.6% of users (Dollarhide, 2024). The introduction of Facebook and Twitter (now known as the X platform) in the years that followed caused an explosion in the use of social media. To instantly reach a global audience, businesses flocked to these platforms. Worldwide, 46% of internet users obtain their news from social media, according to the Global Web Index. Comparatively, 40% of users visit news websites to view news. Millennials and Gen Z were the two groups most likely to watch news on social media than the other generations (Dollarhide, 2024). It is hardly surprising that social media plays a major part in marketing strategies for many businesses considering how many hours people spend on social media websites and apps every day. Simultaneously, the realm of social media is undergoing constant transformation, as comparatively new applications like Clubhouse, Signal, and TikTok are joining the ranks of well-known social networks like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X platform. According to Data Reports, as of late 2022, internet users aged 16 to 64 worldwide spent an average of 2 hours and 31 minutes per day on social media. The report further states that "social media now accounts for its greatest ever share of total online time, with almost four in every 10 minutes spent online now attributable to social media activities (Dollarhide, 2024).

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms have transformed communication by facilitating instantaneous global connectivity. These platforms are especially appealing to young people because they are interactive and let them easily share content, ideas, and experiences. But this accessibility also has a unique set of drawbacks and difficulties. A turning point in the history of human interaction and communication has been reached with the emergence of social media. Social media platforms have completely changed how people connect, share information, and interact with the world in the last 20 years. The history of social media has been swift and extensive, spanning from the early days of MySpace and Friendster to the hegemony of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and other platforms. Modern technology is not created overnight, as we all know. Although we know different specific years of the invention of the computer, the internet. They have been invented from different concepts over hundreds of years. There is a similar history of innovation in the world of social media. Although the basic concept of social media dates back to the invention of the Internet, people have felt its need since the era of letter exchange. Because the main feature of social media is an easy communication system (Hossain, 2022). Therefore, there is no way to deny that today's modern communication media has improved through the invention of telegraph and telephone communication technologies. There is a social media revolution going on right now. Although the journey of social media is long ago, in 2010, a revolution took place across the world. Since then, the use of social media has increased on a massive scale (Hossain, 2022).

Table 1: Development of some important Social Media

Year	Invitation/Development of Social Media	Description
1792	Telegraph	A device for sending messages by visual signals, with the help of towers and pivoting shutters, messages were delivered much faster than a horse over a long distance.
1876	Telephone	A communication device that allows two users to talk to each other when they are so far away.
1895	Radio	A device transmitting signals by electromagnetic waves.
1969	CompuServe	The first commercial online service in the United States.
1971	First email	A text message is sent as part of a program for ARPANET.
1978	Bulletin Board System	Computer terminals that permit users to share or exchange messages on a network.
1979	Usenet	Newsgroups that allowed the user to exchange user-generated content.
1986	LISTSERV	First email list management program.
1988	Internet Relay Chat	A chatting system based on client/server software and based on certain rules and conventions.
1995	Classmates	A social networking service designed to help users to find their classmates.
1997	Six degrees	A social network that permits people to create their profile and socialize with others.



1999	QQ	An instant messaging software service provides micro-blogging, voice chat software, music, movies, online gaming, and shopping.
2002	Friendster	A website that permits users to contact other members, and share videos, photos, and messages via networks.
2003	LinkedIn	The first network devoted to business is employment and business-oriented professional networking service that helps employers.
	MySpace	A social networking website designed to collaborate network of friends, blogs, personal profiles, music, photos, and videos submitted by users.
2004	Facebook	A social networking site that permits to send messages, create profiles, upload photos, and videos, by users and interact with friends, family, and colleagues.
2005	YouTube	A video-sharing platform that permits users to upload their videos and watch videos that are posted by other users.
2006	Twitter	Social networking and online news services on which people post and interact with “tweets”.
2007	Tumblr	A micro-blogging and social networking website that permits users to post content like multimedia etc. to short blogs.
2009	WhatsApp	A cross-platform immediate messaging system that uses the internet to share texts, images, documents, audio, and video messages among users.
2010	Instagram	Photo and video sharing networking service.

Source: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3395665>

If the story of the birth of social media is to be traced, it must be traced back to May 24, 1844, when Samuel Morse sent his first telegram from Baltimore to Washington, DC. With some dots and dashes, he wrote that day 'What God has done'. Almost 180 years after that first telegram, a revolution in communication has taken place. People have brought the whole world into the middle of only a five-and-a-half-inch screen (Rahman, 2022).

The 1970s saw the first social media such as CompuServe and Bulletin Board Systems. In the 70s and 80s, CompuServe introduced something the world had never experienced before – instant communication with friends who lived miles away. Of course, connectivity was lacking and technology was limited, but with some limited privacy on CompuServe, it was an interesting experience. People on CompuServe could only send and receive text messages, which were essentially, emails (Das, & Das, 2016). After a few years, Ward Christensen and Randy Sues developed the Bulletin Board System (BBS) to post material and announce meetings. It was also the first dial-up history and the start of the virtual community.

It started with e-mails. In 1971, a computer engineer named Ray Tomlinson sent the first e-mail. It was experimental though. At Cambridge, he also experimentally ran mail from one computer to another. Many believe that social media was invented by sending that first e-mail. Then in 1986, another programmer named Eric Thomas developed software called Listserv (Hossain, 2022). He developed the software based on the automated mailing list concept. Through which mail will be sent to specific users.

In the 1990s, the world was rapidly evolving on the connected front. Personal computers grew in popularity in developed countries, and people began to realize the potential of a connected world. Then, Internet Relay Chat was invented in 1988. Through which its clients within a network can do instant / real-time messaging. Jarkko Oikarinen invented the first chat system called IRC (Das, & Das, 2016). Through this, the journey of the chatting feature started.

The first truly successful social media site that is still thriving is Classmates.com, which was founded in 1995. The website functioned a few years ago in the form of offering virtual reunions of classmates (Dhingraa & Mudgal, 2019). Early users could not create profiles but could search for each other based on related information about schools and colleges. As features and options were added later, Classmates.com became one of the most successful social networks around and is said to have over 70 million users worldwide (Das, & Das, 2016).

The first social networking site started in 1996. A site called Sixdegrees.com was created at this time. This is considered the first social networking site. The Six Degrees platform was created by Andrew Weinreich (Seitz, 2024). This social networking site was the first in the world to feature profile creation and friend list. A platform called Friendster came in 2002 after the Six Degrees site gave the idea of the first social networking platform (Dhingraa & Mudgal, 2019). It included features such as messaging, friend connections, and profile pages. Friendster quickly became popular, opening the door to more platforms. This is called the pioneer among social



networking sites. Because of its popularity, Google offered to buy Friendster in 2003 for \$30 million. Although that offer was rejected, it was sold in 2015 and later formed as a gaming site based in Malaysia. However now it is completely closed. Another social networking site launched in the same year. And that is MySpace which debuted in 2003 (Dhingraa & Mudgal, 2019). This platform was known as the largest social networking site in the world from 2005 to 2008. Allowing users to add music, graphics, and HTML code to their profiles, completely changes the social networking landscape. In the mid-2000s, it emerged as the leading social media network with millions of users worldwide.

Then came social networking platforms for professionals. Following the popularity of the social networking concept, LinkedIn has entered the virtual world. Their main journey is to use social networking for professional and business purposes. Its current number of users is more than 756 million. Note that LinkedIn was established in 2003 (Blogs, 2024b). Their main journey is to use social networking for professional and business purposes.

Mark Zuckerberg started Facebook in his dorm room in 2004 while a sophomore at Harvard. Facebook was initially only available to Harvard students, but it quickly spread to other colleges and eventually to the general public. What set it apart from rivals was its simple interface, emphasis on real identity, and access to exclusive networks. With a 140-character character limit, Twitter came on the scene in 2006 and introduced the concept of micro-blogging. Twitter quickly became well-known as a platform for real-time news distribution, celebrity engagement, and updates. Meanwhile, YouTube has become the preferred online video-sharing and viewing platform. Since its founding in 2005, YouTube has made content creation more accessible to anyone with a camera and an Internet connection (Das, & Das, 2016).

Smartphones became widely used in the 2010s, which accelerated the transition to a mobile-centric social media experience. Digital platforms like Instagram, which allows users to share photos and videos, Snapchat, which offers ephemeral messaging, and TikTok, which offers short-form videos, have become popular among young audiences and changed the way people communicate and engage with technology. Social media continues to change today, as new trends like live streaming, influencer marketing, and augmented reality take hold. Social media presents unprecedented opportunities for communication, expression, and community building, but it also brings issues of digital well-being, misinformation, and privacy. The history of social media continues to be one of innovation, adaptation, and social impact as we move forward, reflecting how rapidly both technology and human interaction are evolving.

Today there are thousands of social networking websites and apps all over the world. The platforms are constantly bringing new features. As a result of which people have become mercury in them. Virtual life has developed. This virtual life is now more dominant than real life. As a result, specializing in the world of social media through writing is a very difficult task. Artificial intelligence features are coming to the social media platforms we use. This will soon give us a different experience. This is how the world of social media is moving forward (Blogs, 2024b).

SOCIAL MEDIA THAT THE YOUTH ARE ATTRACTED TO

Here are some popular social media platforms that attract youth:

- **Instagram:** Known for its visual content, Instagram is popular among youth for sharing photos and videos, connecting with friends, and following influencers and celebrities.
- **Facebook:** Many youth use Facebook to stay in touch with family members, especially older relatives who may not be active on other social media platforms. It serves as a bridge between generations. Facebook Messenger is widely used for private messaging and group chats, offering features like video calls, voice messages, and stickers that appeal to youth.
- **Snapchat:** Popular for its disappearing messages and photo-sharing features, Snapchat is favored by youth for its real-time communication and playful filters.
- **TikTok:** With its short-form video format, TikTok has exploded in popularity among youth for creating, sharing, and discovering entertaining content.
- **YouTube:** Although not always considered a traditional social media platform, YouTube is widely used by youth for watching videos, following content creators, and engaging with communities.
- **Twitter:** Twitter appeals to youth for its fast-paced and real-time nature, allowing users to share thoughts, opinions, and updates in 280 characters or less.
- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a professional networking platform designed for career development, job searching, and business networking. It allows users to create professional profiles, connect with colleagues and peers, search for job opportunities, join groups related to their industry or interests, and share content relevant to their professional field. It's often used by individuals for networking, recruiters for talent acquisition, and businesses for branding and marketing purposes.

- **Discord:** Originally designed for gamers, Discord has evolved into a social platform where youth can join communities (servers) based on shared interests, chat with friends, and participate in voice and text conversations.
- **Reddit:** Known as the "front page of the internet," Reddit attracts youth with its diverse communities (subreddits) covering various topics, from memes and gaming to science and politics.

Social Media



Source: <https://www.hmigift.com/en/services/social-media/about-social-media/>.

These platforms offer different features and cater to various interests, allowing youth to express themselves, connect with others, and explore content in different ways. Social media has permeated every aspect of life in today’s culture, particularly for those of us in our generation. Our smartphones, iPads, and other portable electronics put a wealth of information at our fingertips. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and others, have revolutionized the IT industry. Cyberbullying is one example of how it may be a bad thing, even though we can see how it can be a good means of communication. (Rahaman, 2018).

Table: 2: These were the most widely used social media providers as of January 2023, according to Data Reported:

Social Media	Users
Facebook	2.96 billion users
YouTube	2.51 billion users
WhatsApp	2 billion users
Instagram	2 billion users
WeChat	1.31 billion users
TikTok	1.05 billion users
Facebook Messenger	931 million users
Douyin	715 million users
Telegram	700 million users
Snapchat	635 million users



Source: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media.asp>.

Interestingly, two that are especially well-known in the U.S.—X platform and Pinterest didn't make the top 10 list globally. X platform was 14th, with 556 million users worldwide, while Pinterest was 15th with 445 million (Dollarhide, 2024).

REASONS OF THE GROWTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The growth of social media can be attributed to several key factors:

1. **Technological Advancements:** The development of smartphones, high-speed internet, and user-friendly apps has made accessing social media platforms easier and more convenient.
2. **Global Connectivity:** Social media bridges geographical gaps, allowing people to connect and communicate with others worldwide, fostering a sense of global community.
3. **Accessibility and Affordability:** Many social media platforms are free to use, making them accessible to a broad audience regardless of economic status.
4. **Content Variety and Personalization:** Platforms offer diverse content, from news and entertainment to educational resources, and use algorithms to tailor content to individual preferences, enhancing user engagement.
5. **Social Interaction and Networking:** Social media fulfills fundamental human needs for social interaction and networking, helping people stay in touch with friends and family, and build professional connections.
6. **User-Generated Content:** The ability for users to create and share their content, including videos, photos, and blogs, empowers self-expression and fosters a sense of community.
7. **Business and Marketing:** Businesses leverage social media for marketing, customer engagement, and brand building, recognizing its vast reach and influence.
8. **Real-Time Information and News:** Social media platforms provide real-time updates and news, allowing users to stay informed about current events as they happen.
9. **Entertainment and Recreation:** Features like video streaming, games, and live events attract users looking for entertainment and leisure activities.
10. **Influencer Culture:** The rise of influencers and content creators has popularized social media platforms as people follow personalities for entertainment, advice, and trends.

These factors collectively contribute to the widespread adoption and rapid growth of social media globally.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH

Today's youth are indeed navigating uncharted territory shaped by the pervasive influence of social media. While it offers a platform for expression, connection, and learning, its challenges require a strategic, conscious approach. This investigation serves as a reminder that by understanding both the advantages and pitfalls, we can better equip youth to thrive in a digital age. Young people are greatly impacted by social media, both positively and negatively (S, 2023). Educators and parents must guide young people through the possible hazards of social media use and have conversations with them about responsible usage. Additionally, youth should be aware of the possible risks associated with social media use and take precautions to stay safe. To mitigate the negative effects of social media while maximizing its potential for positive change, legislators, educators, parents, and young people themselves must critically evaluate the platform's influence and encourage responsible and healthy usage. Furthermore, it is critical to keep in mind that social media is only one aspect of a young person's life. They must spend time with friends and family in person and maintain a balance between their online and offline lives.

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH

Social media can have several positive impacts on youth, including:

1. **Social Connectivity:** Social media platforms let young people communicate with friends, family, and classmates from anywhere in the world. It makes communication easier and creates a feeling of community, which helps young people keep up their networks of friends and support.
2. **Information and Awareness:** Social media is an enormous informational resource covering a wide range of subjects, from news and current affairs to instructional materials and original content. Youth have access to a variety of viewpoints, can discover new cultures, and can remain informed about significant issues, all of which help them develop into well-rounded people.
3. **Expression and Creativity:** Youth can express themselves creatively through writing, art, photography, music, and video on social media. Young creators are allowed to connect with like-minded people, share their passions, and showcase their talents



on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. This leads to a growth in self-confidence and personal development.

4. **Community Building:**

Through social media, young people can locate and engage with groups based on common interests, pastimes, identities, or causes. Online communities are fan bases, support systems, or activism movements, that offer a feeling of empowerment, solidarity, and teamwork.

5. **Educational Opportunities:**

Social media platforms present chances for skill development and informal learning. Youth have access to educational resources that are suited to their interests and goals, enhancing traditional education and broadening their knowledge base. These resources range from tutorials and how-to guides to online courses and webinars.

6. **Entrepreneurship and Networking:**

Young people can showcase their entrepreneurial endeavors on social media, whether they involve starting a small business, selling handmade goods, or making money off of their creative abilities. Young professionals can also benefit from professional networking and career development opportunities made possible by platforms such as LinkedIn.

7. **Social Awareness and Activism:**

Youth can advocate for social justice, equality, and environmental causes by using social media to magnify their voices. Online support, awareness, and meaningful change in society are generated by youth-led movements and campaigns.

Ultimately, despite the risks and challenges it poses, social media has a positive influence on youth that should not be disregarded. Young people can use social media to connect, learn, create, and make positive contributions to their communities and the wider world by using it responsibly.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH

The negative impact of social media on youth is a topic of growing concern, with research highlighting several detrimental effects. Here are some key points:

1. **Mental Health Issues:** Overuse of social media has been connected to higher rates of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem in young people. Feelings of inadequacy and social isolation can be exacerbated by the constant pressure to present oneself in a certain way and by comparing one's life to others' well-curated ones (Nesi, 2020).

2. **Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is a phenomenon in which people are subjected to offensive or dehumanizing messages, comments, or images on social media. Cyberbullying can have serious psychological repercussions for young people, including anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts.

3. **Sleep Disturbances:** Using social media right before bed can mess with your sleep schedule and cause insomnia and sleep loss. The blue light that screens emit and the stimulation that comes from interacting with social media content can disrupt the body's normal circadian rhythm.

4. **Negative Body Image:** Social media platforms frequently propagate unattainable beauty standards, which encourage young people to engage in unhealthy behaviors like extreme dieting, excessive exercise, or cosmetic procedures as a result of body dissatisfaction. Perceptions of one's appearance can be distorted and eating disorders can be exacerbated by constant exposure to images of "perfect" bodies.

5. **Addiction and Distraction:** Addiction to social media is a rising issue among young people, marked by obsessive use and trouble putting down digital devices. Social media addiction can hurt one's general well-being, academic achievement, and in-person relationships.

6. **Privacy Concerns:** Many youths are ignorant of the dangers of posting images and other personal information online. When young people are careless with their digital footprint, they run the real risk of experiencing major consequences from identity theft, privacy breaches, and online predators.

7. **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out):** People who use social media feel compelled to stay online and take part in every social event and trend, creating a culture of perpetual connectedness. If one feels left out or excluded, this fear of missing out can cause stress, anxiety, and a sense of inadequacy.

8. **Distorted Perception of Reality:** Social media feeds' selective curation can lead to a skewed sense of reality where people only see the positive parts of other people's lives and ignore the difficult or uninteresting parts. Feelings of inadequacy and a distorted perception of what makes a fulfilling life may result from this.

Ultimately, even though social media has many positive aspects, some drawbacks should be acknowledged and addressed for young people. Important steps in reducing these negative effects include teaching young people about responsible digital citizenship, encouraging healthy online behaviors, and encouraging open communication about the risks and difficulties of social media.



THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

Youth development is greatly impacted by social media, which presents both opportunities and difficulties. Here are some ways in which social media influences youth development positively:

1. **Connection and Communication:** Social media platforms afford youth the chance to establish connections and engage in communication with peers, family, and communities worldwide. In especially for young people who might feel alone or marginalized in their offline lives, these online interactions can promote friendships, support systems, and a sense of belonging.
2. **Information and Learning:** Social media is a huge information and resource bank that gives young people access to tutorials, news updates, educational materials, and cultural insights. Opportunities for self-directed learning and skill development are offered by websites such as YouTube, TED Talks, and educational forums.
3. **Creativity and Self-Expression:** Social media gives young people the creative expression tools they need to tell stories, create original content, and share multimedia. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Tumblr provide a platform for young people to showcase their talents and perspectives to a global audience while also encouraging artistic expression, originality, and digital storytelling.
4. **Activism and Civic Engagement:** Young people can now mobilize around issues that are important to them, fight for social justice, and elevate the voices of those who are marginalized thanks to social media, which has become a potent tool for youth activism and social change. Digital organizing, online petitions, and hashtag campaigns have become essential components of modern social movements spearheaded by young people.
5. **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Social media platforms provide youthful innovators and entrepreneurs with chances to start companies, advertise goods, and develop personal brands. Youth can monetize their passions, talents, and hobbies through crowdfunding websites, e-commerce platforms, and influencer marketing, which promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.
6. **Global Awareness and Cultural Exchange:** Social media introduces young people to a variety of viewpoints, languages, and cultural practices, fostering intercultural dialogue and global awareness. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit function as online forums where young individuals from diverse backgrounds can interact, share stories, and create connections beyond geographical and cultural barriers.
7. **Empowerment and Agency:** Youth can use social media to express themselves, exercise agency, and engage in public conversation about issues that impact their lives. Young people can challenge societal norms and stereotypes, advocate for their rights, and assert their identities through blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and social justice campaigns.

All things considered, social media offers chances for young people to grow positively, but some hazards and difficulties need to be acknowledged and dealt with, like misinformation, cyberbullying, and excessive screen time. We can assist young people in navigating the intricacies of the digital world and utilizing social media's transformative potential for their growth and well-being by encouraging digital literacy, responsible online behavior, and critical thinking abilities.

YOUTH AND ONLINE GAMES

The Internet is now widely used in practically every nation. There are numerous uses for it, such as corresponding with friends abroad or sending emails for work and school. People who enjoy utilizing social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tumblr, and Line for communication also use the Internet. Online gaming is another way that people use the Internet. Teenagers all over the world are playing online games more and more. A large number of them engage in daily online gaming. Because of their popularity, online games are growing quickly. It has a wide range of effects on teenagers. Addiction to online gaming has raised concerns because it influences young people's suicide rates. Addiction to the internet has been linked to aggressive behavior, sleeplessness, and other psychological problems in young people. Youth psychology is greatly impacted by online game addiction, as these individuals spend several hours a day playing these games (Ruzic-Baf, Strnak & Debeljuh, 2016).

A recent survey estimates that 2.2 billion people worldwide, mostly young adults, teenagers, and children, play video games on a regular or irregular basis. PUBG is currently one of the most played online games. This game has become more and more popular in the Indian subcontinent, based on several statistics released by the media. Recent surveys indicate that more than half of youngsters aged 8 to 17 years old spend over three hours daily on social media or gaming platforms. Additionally, data shows that 54% of gamers in India spend between 5 to 15 hours weekly on gaming, indicating a deep engagement with this activity. This game is played by 8.7 million people daily worldwide and by about 22.7 million people monthly (Choudhury, 2022). In 2023, there were approximately 455 million online gamers in India. This represents an 8% increase from the year before and is projected to surpass 491 million by 2024. It's estimated that 90 million of these players made payments for online

games in that year (Statista, 2024b). This illustrates the extent to which children and young people in the nation are addicted to online games. PUBG's popularity has exploded, mostly as a result of mobile phones being so widely available and the internet being so easily accessible. Similar to other battle royal games, Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) is an extremely violent game with a level of horror that sends kids and teenagers into a frenzy. Extreme violence, addiction, a decline in social interaction, a decline in physical and mental health, sleep disturbances, a reduction in the amount of time spent on different tasks, and so on are all detrimental aspects of this game.

The number of children and teenagers who are addicted to online games is rising, while their interest in sports is declining. They also do not follow any traditional customs. This addiction to playing online games on gadgets has been dubbed a "digital drug" by psychologists! (Matin, 2021). Gaming disorder is the term for the mental health issue brought on by a video game addiction. Experts claim that because teenagers are addicted to these games, they are straying from their familial and social roles. During the game, they may turn violent. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers addiction to video games to be a mental illness. Playing video games can make a person depressed. The game PUBG has already been outlawed in several nations due to its excessive violence (Choudhury, 2022).

The harsh reality is that young people who grow up with violent video games or movies tend to identify with those characters and end up becoming them. They are influenced to act in real life by the behaviors of virtual characters. Youngsters and teenagers are developing an ingrained belief in violent behavior due to the proliferation of weapons in online games, killing opponents fast to solve problems, and enjoying themselves by setting off bombs and inciting fear. Eventually, a violent world emerged between them that they were unable to escape. Inspired to address several issues within traditional society, he puts himself in danger by acting violently (Qu, X., 2023).

Various online games can have negative effects on youth if not managed properly:

- **Addiction:** Overindulgence in gaming can result in addiction, which makes it difficult to prioritize other responsibilities like social interactions, education, and exercise.
- **Social Isolation:** An excessive amount of time spent playing video games online can decrease in-person social interaction, which can result in feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- **Aggressive Behavior:** Teenagers who play some online games, especially those with violent content, may become more aggressive and desensitized to violence.
- **Cyberbullying:** Players in online gaming communities may face exclusion, harassment, and insults, which can serve as fertile ground for cyberbullying.
- **Poor Academic Performance:** Due to reduced focus, time spent gaming rather than studying, and disturbed sleep patterns, excessive gaming can hurt academic performance.
- **Health Issues:** Extended gaming sessions have been linked to physical health issues like eyestrain, obesity, and repetitive strain injuries.
- **Financial Burden:** If not closely supervised, in-game purchases and microtransactions can cause financial strain for young people and their families.

Addressing these negative effects requires moderation, parental guidance, and open communication about responsible gaming habits.

Youth addiction to mobile games



Source: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/hunger-games-addiction-to-mobile-games-on-the-rise/article65428911.ece/amp/>.

DIGITAL LITERACY ON YOUTH

The ability to use digital technologies to find, assess, create, and communicate information is known as digital literacy. It covers a wide range of abilities, including the capacity to use digital tools for a variety of tasks like communication, teamwork, research, and problem-solving, as well as fundamental computer skills, internet proficiency, media literacy, critical thinking, and cybersecurity awareness. To put it simply, being digitally literate helps people survive and prosper in an increasingly digital environment.

Digital literacy



Source: <https://www.yourdictionary.com/articles/digital-literacy-communication-tips>.

Digital media and new technologies are becoming more and more popular among youth. To effectively use a new venue for youth work, promote digital literacy, and help young people manage some of the risks involved, online youth work practices have a place (Adams, 2023). Young people who possess digital literacy are better equipped to navigate the many opportunities that come with new and developing technologies while also being aware of the risks that they may pose. In summary, as digital technology becomes more and more integrated into society, digital literacy is the "savviness" that enables youth to engage in meaningful and safe participation. Additionally, there is a growing push for schools to integrate ICT into every subject area of the primary and secondary curricula. Digital literacy is now widely used in classrooms and can support young minds in extending their use of technology for self-expression and creativity as well as in developing a deeper comprehension of the intricacies of their work (Arora, 2021).

ADVANCED APPLICATION FOR PEOPLE AND YOUTH

There are many educational applications tailored for students covering various subjects and levels. Some popular ones include:

- **Duolingo:** Millions of people use the well-known language-learning website Duolingo worldwide, with many of them residing in India. In addition to many other languages, it offers courses in Hindi, English, Spanish, French, German, and many more.
- **Quizlet:** Quizlet is a flexible learning tool that is popular throughout the world, including in India. It provides students with a variety of study aids, including games, quizzes, and flashcards, to help them learn a range of subjects quickly. Users have the option to generate custom study sets or select from millions of pre-made sets that cover a wide range of subjects, including history, math, science, and languages.
- **Google Classroom:** In India, Google Classroom is a commonly utilized virtual learning environment, particularly in higher education institutions. Pupils can access assignments, turn in work digitally, work on group projects with classmates, and get teacher feedback. Google Classroom makes it easy for teachers and students to share and work together on documents and presentations because it integrates seamlessly with other Google products like Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, and Slides.



- **Photomath:** Students use Photomath, a well-known educational app, both in India and globally. Using the camera on their device, users can solve mathematical problems by just snapping a picture of the issue. After that, the app offers detailed answers, justifications, and graphs for a wide range of math issues, covering arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry, calculus, and more.
- **TED-Ed:** A vast selection of interesting and educational videos covering a variety of subjects is available on the educational website TED-Ed. It is a continuation of the TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) brand, which is well-known for its provocative speeches. Videos from TED-Ed address a variety of topics, including science, technology, math, literature, and history.
- **Coursera:** Coursera offers courses, specializations, and degrees in a variety of subjects, including technology, business, humanities, health, and more, in collaboration with universities and organizations around the globe. With so many self-paced courses available on Coursera, students can learn whenever it is most convenient for them. Furthermore, Coursera provides certificates upon course completion and financial aid options, making it advantageous and accessible for Indian students wishing to further their education or develop their skills.
- **Quora:** Quora is a question-and-answer platform where users can ask questions on virtually any topic and receive answers from the community. Users can also contribute their knowledge by answering questions, upvoting or downvoting answers, and engaging in discussions. It covers a wide range of topics, from technology and science to personal development and entertainment. Quora aims to connect people with valuable information and insights shared by experts and enthusiasts from around the world.
- **Scratch:** A visual programming language and online community based on blocks, Scratch was created by the MIT Media Lab's Lifelong Kindergarten Group. It is intended to introduce children and novices to programming concepts in an engaging and participatory manner. To teach students how to code and think computationally, schools, coding clubs, and educational programs all use Scratch extensively in India.
- **Byju's- The Learning App:** Provides engaging instruction in a variety of subjects, including science, math, and more, for students in kindergarten through high school.
- **Toppr:** Offers students preparing for exams like JEE, NEET, CBSE, and ICSE individualized learning solutions.
- **Unacademy:** Provides instructor-led courses covering a broad spectrum of topics and competitive examinations, such as SSC, UPSC, banking, and railroads.
- **Meritnation:** Offers ICSE and CBSE students live classes, interactive exercises, and study materials.
- **Vedantu:** Provides live online tutoring in a variety of subjects, such as science, math, and English, to students in grades 1 through 12.
- **Khan Academy:** Offers free educational materials in the fields of science, math, economics, and the humanities.
- **Doubtnut:** Uses live sessions and videos to assist students in clearing up their doubts about arithmetic and science problems.

These apps can enhance learning experiences and support students in different subjects and areas of interest.

FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The relationship between social media and youth in the future is expected to evolve significantly, influenced by technological advancements, societal changes, and regulatory developments. Social media platforms are likely to incorporate more artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) features, creating immersive experiences. This could enhance creativity and learning but also pose risks related to mental health and reality distortion. As awareness of the mental health impacts of social media grows, future platforms might implement better tools for managing screen time, detecting harmful content, and promoting positive interactions. This could help mitigate issues like anxiety, depression, and cyberbullying among youth. With increasing concerns about data privacy, future social media platforms may adopt stricter data protection measures and offer greater control over personal information. Youth will need to be educated about digital privacy to navigate these platforms safely. Social media could become more integrated into educational systems, providing interactive learning environments and networking opportunities. This could help youth develop digital literacy and professional skills from an early age. As digital presence becomes more integral to daily life, there will be a greater emphasis on teaching youth about digital citizenship, including responsible use, ethics, and the impact of their online behavior. Governments and organizations may implement more regulations to protect young users from harmful content and ensure age-appropriate use of social media. This could include stricter age verification processes and content moderation standards. Social media will continue to influence cultural norms and social interactions. Future platforms might foster more inclusive and diverse communities, but there could also be challenges related to echo chambers and misinformation. Overall, the future of social media and youth will be shaped by a combination of technological



innovation, proactive measures for well-being, and evolving societal norms. It will be crucial to balance the benefits of connectivity and learning with the need to protect and empower young users.

CONCLUSION

Social media has a profoundly negative impact on young people's relationships, behaviors, and perceptions. This impact is evident and cannot be denied. Social media poses serious risks and challenges in addition to providing never-before-seen chances for connection, self-expression, and information sharing. Excessive use of social media can have negative effects on young people's mental health, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation, as research has repeatedly demonstrated. Among the many issues surrounding young people's use of social media are cyberbullying, addiction, sleep disorders, and negative body image. Furthermore, the carefully curated content of social media feeds has the potential to warp people's understanding of reality, setting them up for disappointment and inadequacy. Social media's detrimental effects on youth well-being are exacerbated by privacy concerns, FOMO, and the ongoing pressure to maintain an online presence. It is important to understand, though, that not all social media use is negative. Social media may encourage creativity, strengthen social ties, and offer priceless chances for education and self-discovery when used carefully and sparingly. In the future, combating the detrimental effects of social media on young people will necessitate a diverse strategy. To reduce the risks associated with social media use, parents, educators, and legislators must communicate openly and teach young people about responsible digital citizenship and healthy online habits. In the end, achieving a balance between the positive effects of social media and its negative effects is necessary for young people navigating its complex landscape. Through the prioritization of digital literacy, mental health support, and meaningful offline connections, we can enable youth to fully utilize social media while ensuring their safety and well-being.

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