

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TEENAGER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The changes in the technology have brought a new method of communication. Today a lot of people, especially teenagers, play a great role in developing this communication method. The teenagers' interact using various applications; these applications, however, have an effect on their psychological aspects, for example, anxiety, lack of confidence, and antisocial behavior. With more time spent on an online social messenger service a teenager can develop these problems. A better understanding of the use of these applications is important in order to find a perfect prevention method.

Keywords: Social media, Psychological Aspects, Communication

Introduction

In this era the vast development of modern technology cannot be separated from daily life. The importance of technology has made us aware of the information that flows around the world. With the creation of internet, things have been made easy, especially when it is about the widespread of social media which have become an extended version of a new social interaction in the real world. Such social media have been viewed as a trend and have brought about the changes in the human social lifestyle. The social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, etc. have gained popularity among the young generation, especially teenagers. These online service media provide information of trends and social events that are happening around these young children. These effective and user-friendly applications give teenagers what they need in order to be able to adapt their pace within the world. By using these applications, they create certain competitions that are seemingly harmless just to show the existence of their status.

The Internet has made these applications easier and, with the nonstop connection, they spend hours indulging in them. At some point the frequency of face-to-face interactions are made limited with the use of these applications. Even though it may seem practical, these children lose the time they spend to actually create a better communication and to build more productive lifestyle in the real-life environment. The lack of audiovisual cues, coupled with the ability to create fictional identities or remain anonymous in online forums, led many experts to conclude that the Internet was particularly suitable for those seeking to overcome the inhibitions typically experienced in real-life social interactions (Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984; Myers, 1987).

The invisible addiction of social media often made their users unaware of the consequences themselves. Yet, despite the recent technological advances in social communication, and the fact that social bonding is a crucial psychological aspect of being human, there are certain individuals for whom social interactions are difficult, leading to real-life anxiety (Stein & Stein, 2008). This statement means that those who are unable to create social interactions outside their environment will lead to anxiety that is triggered by feeling of loneliness.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most important functions of social networks is to connect the users with the other users. There is a possibility, therefore, that social network sites might work as social lubricants that help people who struggle with real-life relationships initiate and establish social interactions with others (Forest & Wood, 2012). Furthermore, a study in particular found that online social communication skills and self-esteem are correlated, indicating a link between the strength of offline relationships and time spent online; this might not work to the advantage of socially anxious individuals for whom offline relationships are difficult to forge in the first place (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011).

Research Methodology

The method used in this research is a descriptive-qualitative one. It is used in describing the problem through analysis in understanding the nature of the problem. The analysis will be based on the issue presented since the qualitative method engages in understanding the problem thoroughly.

Discussion and Analysis

The presence of internet along with the development of popculture and social media has become a prominent medium in delivering the changes. The social media are able to make a practical communication medium as a new way of extending one's hospitality. Nowadays if a teenager does not have any accounts on social networking sites, he or she is considered by many as outdated or unable to keep up with the latest trend that has been going around. This notion creates a motivation in order demonstrate the existence of their status, so they finally begin to learn to access the social networking sites. They have felt that

through these sites they are able to develop their relationships even to the extent of doing business or opening an online commerce.

A Croatian study (Pantic et al., 2012) found that time spent on Facebook by high school students was positively correlated with depression. These findings were mirrored by Rosen et al. (2013), who found that participants who spent more time online and those who performed more Facebook image management evidenced more clinical symptoms of major depression. A study of American university students found that more intense Facebook use predicted increased loneliness (Lou et al., 2012). In 2013, Rosen et al. studied the Facebook usage of 1,143 college-age students. The researchers found that major depressive disorder, dysthymia, bipolar-mania, narcissism, antisocial personality disorder, and compulsive behavior were predicted by one or more Facebook usage variables (general use, number of friends, use for image management).

This shows that some people have neglected the effect of the long term disease building its way little by little. Even though the use of online messenger services in some manner is able to help to improve confidence, this only confidence is due to the internet nature of being anonymous. That's why people never have any second thought and they confidently upload or set up fake profile to help them express their thoughts openly and freely. In the case of online profile, users often use exaggerated profile status. This excessive behavior is one of the causes that helps them build their confidence in the virtual world. This profile is a way of competing and adapting to a certain perimeter that these users established. Moreover, this invisible confidence is something that has caused the decreasing of real-life interaction. The more and more interaction they made online caused them to spend more time in the virtual world and less time in the real world. This has made them an antisocial thinking that it is more convenient to talk online than to spend time just for some social hangout. The circulating topics online also provided a way to users to start an online forum to discuss the matters. Even though this online forum is a positive one, it can also be used to spread rumors which will become a new trend of topics to discuss.

A teenager exposed early with social media can be very addicted to them because of the information in the social media that is made from this teenager's social environment. To people who use the social media as a tool to prove and express themselves it can also be harmless. As mentioned above the confidence in the virtual world is only in the mind of the users; they can express themselves indeed but they fail to comprehend the situation in the real life. For example, cyberbullying always finds its way in every corner of social media and other websites. Another explanation is that people with low self-esteem express themselves in ways that are not particularly likeable – such as posting negative remarks more often – making them less likely to make new friends (Forest & Wood, 2011). When the user is faced with this problem, they can create a defense. Nevertheless, does this solve the problem when they go outside? It is likely that it does. The constant bullying, however, will eventually bring the victim into a realization to what they face and this confidence cannot help because it only gives the feeling of safety due to the anonymity nature of the internet which is not built based on the experience in the real world.

There are also several studies linking the social media to the anxiety and compulsive behavior. A recent research study found that 45% of British adults have indicated they feel worried or uncomfortable when they cannot access their email or social network sites (Anxiety UK, 2012). A new medical term has been created out of this constant connectivity: Phantom vibration syndrome, defined as perceived vibration from a cell phone that is not vibrating, has been reported to occur with large numbers of people (Drouin et al., 2012; Rothberg et al., 2010). This syndrome is a result of the urges and needs to frequently checking their messages and replying the messages on the social media.

The social media by its nature are very useful, but they also have to be used with a great understanding. The teenagers may find themselves in a new world that makes them comfortable. In spite of this the lessons which they can get through face-to-face interaction and experiencing the changes in the social life will help them to develop a healthier lifestyle and to create a better psychological development that will help them to build their own confidence and help them to focus on the problem they are involved in.

Conclusion

Teenage is the time when everything is on its way to discovery. Teenagers will find themselves in various activities and problems that will help them to find their talent and capabilities. Social media as a medium of communication may help them to engage in the various conversations. What provided in the social media can be very addictive but the information connects a teenage social life strongly. This addiction causes the teenager to stay connected to the world in order keep their social life going. Therefore, a prevention from parents and the teenage understanding of the use of the media itself must be deepened.

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