

The Effects of Social Media on Mental Health

Introduction

Researchers are interested in looking into how social media use affects mental health since it continues to play an important role in people's lives all around the world. Given that mental health problems are widespread around the world, the connection between social media use and mental health has been a subject of great concern. This literature review critically analyzes five studies that examine the relationship between social media and mental health. While some studies have found a link between social media use and better mental health outcomes, other studies have shown that excessive social media use can have a detrimental effect on mental health. Therefore, in order to better comprehend the implications for both individuals and society as a whole, it is crucial to take into account the possible advantages and disadvantages of social media use on mental health.

Literature Review

The study by Lin et al. (2016) showed the association between social media use and depression among young adults in the United States. Researchers discovered that people who spent more time on social media had higher depression risk. The authors of the study believe that the negative effects of social media on mental health may be caused by social comparison, exposure to unfavorable events and news or the pressure to maintain an ideal online persona. Although the study provides evidence of the potential negative effects of social media use on mental health, it is limited by the fact that the data was collected at a single point in time and relied on self-reported measures.

Braghieri, Levy, and Makarin (2020) present a report on the current state of social media use in the United States. They conducted an analysis of the data gathered from over 4,000 adults by the Pew Research Centre, revealing that most Americans use one or more social media platforms. The report also highlighted the differences in social media use across different demographic groups. Although the report provides valuable insights into social media use in the United States, it is limited by the fact that it only focuses on one country. On the other hand the recent research done by Bashir and Bhat (2020) focused on the effects of social media on mental health. Compared to Braghieri's and Levy's report this research is not limited by the fact that it focuses on only one country. The authors examined both potential negative and positive effects of social media use on mental health, including anxiety, stress, depression, loneliness, and self-esteem. The authors found that the more time spent on social media, the more likely one is to experience one of the potential negative effects. The article also highlights the rise of Phantom Vibration Syndrome, which is the frequent checking of messages even though nobody texted you. While this article provides a comprehensive overview of the potential effects of social media on mental health, it is limited by the fact that it does not include any original research and only relies on existing studies. Hampton, Rainie, Lu, Shin, and Purcell (2015) looked into the function of social media in establishing and sustaining interpersonal connections. They discovered that using social media can support people in maintaining contact with distant friends and relatives. But the study also discovered that excessive social media use could cause feelings of social isolation and loneliness.

In 2015, a research study led by Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, and Halliwell aimed to investigate the correlation between social media usage among young women and their body image concerns, as well as their tendency to compare themselves to other social media users. The study found that women who spent more time on social media tended to have more negative perceptions of their bodies and were more likely to engage in comparisons with others. The authors concluded that social media provides a platform for constant self-comparison, leading to unrealistic beauty standards. Two years later in 2017, a study made by Huang and Alessandro looked at how social media use affected college students' self-esteem in the US. Only individuals who used social media to communicate with close friends and family members showed a favorable relationship between their usage of social media and self-esteem, according to the authors. According to the study, social media can provide users a sense of acceptance and validation, which may increase self-esteem. The study's use of self-reported measures of social media usage and self-esteem, however, places certain restrictions on its findings.

Conclusion

Overall, the studies reviewed in this literature review suggest that social media use may have negative effects on mental health, particularly among young people. The potential negative effects identified include: depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness. While some studies have also highlighted potential positive effects, such as increased self-esteem and social support, further research is needed to better understand the complex relationship between social media use and mental health. Interventions aimed at reducing social media use may be beneficial for mental health.

Reference list

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