

A Survey of Social Media Effect on Youth Generation

Hui Liang Khor ¹, Noor Akma Abu Bakar ¹, Jessie Ooi ¹

¹ Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, Tunku Abdul Rahman University
College, Kuantan, Malaysia
Corresponding email: ooiessie@taru.edu.my

Abstract

The usage of social media by our teenagers and young adult has increased significantly. The mental health issue among the youth has shown significant growth as well. The similarity in the trend has led the researchers to wonder if there's any linkage between the two. This study investigates the current state of the art regarding social media's impact on the youth generation. To study the recent work, a survey has been carried out. The process consists of 5 main phases, (1) to identify the research question, (2) to identify the search parameters, (3) to select relevant studies, (4) to evaluate and analyse the study and (5) to summarise and report the findings. Recent works have shown that it harms teenagers' and young adults' mental and physical health. However, in terms of academic performance, while it might lead to a decrease in performance, it could also bring a positive impact. Multiple studies have been conducted over the years; nonetheless, most of the studies focused on western countries with distinctly different cultures and environments, or it is carried out in a small population. Therefore, it is essential to properly study social media's effect on our local youth generation to investigate its impact on them.

Keywords: Social Media, Youth Generation

Introduction

In recent years, the digital environment has swiftly transformed, with social media playing a significant role in the lives of teenagers and young adults. Simultaneously, the trend of mental health issues has increased significantly compared to previous years. In the study carried out in (Screen Time Use Among US Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings From the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study, 2022), adolescents reported a mean (SD) of 7.70 (5.74) h/d of screen use, mostly spent on watching or streaming videos, movies, or television shows (2.42 [2.45] h/d), multiple-player gaming (1.44 [2.21] h/d), and single-player gaming (1.17 [1.82] h/d). Not only that, but mental health issues such as depression and an increase in the suicide rate have become more common among adolescents, with suicide rates among youth aged 10 to 24 rising by 56% from 2007 to 2017. According to the studies by Mareton & Greenfield, there has been a 94% rise in demand for university counselling services in the last five years for undergraduate students in the United Kingdom (Moreton & Greenfield, 2022).

Given that the rise of mental health issues has coincided with the increased usage of social media, there have been questions about possible links between these two factors. Therefore, it is essential to study the impact of social media on our future generations. In recent years, there has been a lot of research on social media and adolescent mental health, where several studies were looking into whether more regular use of social media is linked to depression, body image concerns and disordered eating, education performance and externalising problems. In this study, we will look at recent research and their current findings and conduct a review to evaluate the overall effect of social media on our younger generation.

Methods

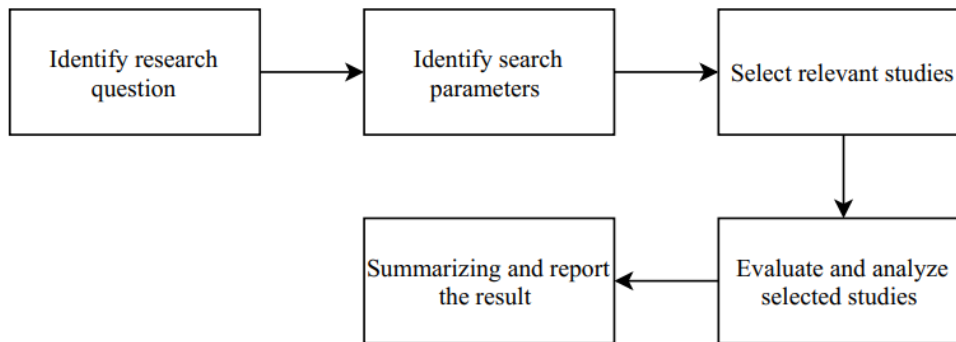


Figure 1 Research Methodology

First, the research question needs to be identified. From there, we will locate the parameter for selecting the relevant studies. The relevant research will be chosen according to the parameters defined in the previous step. The process's next stage is evaluating the studies and analysing the articles. The final phase of this study will be summarising and reporting the results. The research question used to guide this study is "What are the affect social medial have on teenagers and young adults". The article collection will be limited to the peer-reviewed articles available on the Science Direct database, and the keywords used for searching are "Social media", "Social media and youth", and "Social media and young adult". And only articles that were published within the last year will be selected. The selected papers will then be analysed and summarised.

Results and Discussion.

From our findings, it can be concluded that social media primarily affect the youth in 3 main perspectives: Their physical shape or health, mental health, and academic performance.

Mental Health

One of the main areas investigated by the researcher is the linkage between the mental health issue and the youth's usage of social media. Mahalingham et al. discover that excessive use of social media negatively impacts the youth's mental health, especially for those who have trouble controlling their attention (Mahalingham et al., 2022). Not only that but social media has also been shown to increase the digital stress level of young adults(Xie et al., 2022). Digital stress refers to the anxiety and tension brought on by notifications and alerts from mobile and social media use. Similarly, White-Gosselin and Poulin concluded that social media is positively linked to symptoms of anxiety and depression; it lowers the equality and satisfaction with the mother, as well as disagreement and satisfaction with the father (White-Gosselin & Poulin, 2022). Bersani et al. found that the excessive usage of social media and online video games has led to increased sleep disturbances which in turn increase the possibility for the youth to become aggressive (Bersani et al., 2022). Results indicated that people with university degrees were more likely to endorse favourable sentiments toward political violence and terrorism. As a result, they are more likely to become radicalised when they spend excessive time on social media each day (Hollewell & Longpré, 2021). However, Sundvik and Davis argue that social media's effect might vary in different individuals, and emotional intelligence (EI) is thought to be a protective resource that can buffer the impacts of stressors (Sundvik & Davis, 2022).

Physical Health and Body Image

Another aspect that impacts the youth most is their physical shape and health. Studies have shown that excessive social media usage might increase the risk of being physically ill. According to Lee et al., the longer a user spends on social media, the higher level of C-reactive protein, which is a marker of chronic inflammation, can be observed in their body (Lee et al., 2022). In turn, this led to more trips to health centres that were linked to social media use. On the other hand, the study by Jarrar et al. shows that users who spend more extended sessions on social media are more likely to have body dissatisfaction (Jarrar et al., n.d.).

Moreover, the study has also found that users with a higher level of social anxiety are at a higher risk of suffering from body dissatisfaction due to heavy social media use. Besides, one of the most influential social media users is the current youth generation, meaning they've received most of their information, especially regarding nutrition and health, from social media and the internet. Therefore, research carried out by Parbey et al. emphasises the importance of proper regulation of food marketing and advertisement to safeguard a healthy food environment for the people and combat nutrition miscommunication (Parbey et al., 2022). Lastly, ever since the pandemic, social media has had a massive spike in the topics related to the changes in eating and exercising habits due to their concern about weight and body shape. More than 40% of the respondents reported specific behaviour changes in their weight or shape control. At the same time, although it has not been conclusively decided if it has a positive or negative influence on the youth. It is still essential to provide a healthy internet environment for the youth to promote a healthy mindset regarding their body images and nutritional needs.

Academics

Very often, there's a misconception among parents and the public about the negative impact social media has on the academic performance of the youth. While this has held some truth, the study by Malik et al. finds that social media fatigue correlates to a drop in academic performance (Malik et al., 2020). The use of social media and GPA had a significant, detrimental association. Similarly, Chandrasena and Ilankon also discovered that even though undergraduates were willing to use social media for academic purposes, the frequency of their social media usage still substantially impacted their academic performance (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022). However, Habes et al. investigate the usefulness of YouTube in helping the youth achieve education advancement. Their finding shows that the students were able to receive a positive effect on using YouTube as their digital learning platform. However, this result significantly depends on the student's ability to utilise the platform (Habes et al., 2019).

Conclusions

Social media has become a norm for everyone in this modern age. However, the effect it would have on the user, especially the youth generation, is still largely unclear. Studies have been conducted to study the relationship between different social phenomena, especially the rise in mental health issues among teenagers and young adults. While the study has found a link between the common problem among the youth and increased social media usage, most recent studies still have some bias, such as a small study group or limited to particular races or ethnicities. Furthermore, most studies were conducted in western countries such as the United States. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the effect of social media on our local youth generation since we have different ethnicities and cultures.

References

Bersani, F. S., Barchielli, B., Ferracuti, S., Panno, A., Carbone, G. A., Massullo, C., Farina, B., Corazza, O., Prevete, E., & Tarsitani, L. (2022). The association of problematic use of social media and online video games with aggression is mediated by insomnia severity: A cross-

sectional study in a sample of 18-to 24-year-old individuals. *Aggressive Behavior*, 48(3), 348–355.

Chandrasena, P., & Ilankoon, I. (2022). The impact of social media on academic performance and interpersonal relations among health sciences undergraduates. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 11.

Habes, M., Salloum, S. A., Alghizzawi, M., & Mhamdi, C. (2019). *The relation between social media and students' academic performance in Jordan: YouTube perspective*. 382–392.

Hollewell, G. F., & Longpré, N. (2021). Radicalisation in the social media Era: Understanding the relationship between self-radicalisation and the internet. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 0306624X211028771.

Jarrar, Y., Awobamise, A. O., & Nweke, G. E. (n.d.). The Mediating Effect of Social Anxiety on the Relationship between Social Media Use and Body Dissatisfaction among University Students. *Frontiers in Communication*, 95.

Lee, D. S., Jiang, T., Crocker, J., & Way, B. M. (2022). Social Media Use and Its Link to Physical Health Indicators. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 25(2), 87–93. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2021.0188>

Mahalingham, T., Howell, J., & Clarke, P. J. F. (2022). Attention control moderates the relationship between social media use and psychological distress. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 297, 536–541. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.10.071>

Malik, A., Dhir, A., Kaur, P., & Johri, A. (2020). Correlates of social media fatigue and academic performance decrement: A large cross-sectional study. *Information Technology & People*.

Moreton, L., & Greenfield, S. (2022). University students' views on the impact of Instagram on mental wellbeing: A qualitative study. *BMC Psychology*, 10(1), 1–10.

Parbey, P., Aryeetey, R., & University of Ghana. (2022). A review of food and nutrition communication and promotion in Ghana. *African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development*, 22(2), 19602–19623. <https://doi.org/10.18697/ajfand.107.21810>

Screen Time Use Among US Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings From the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study. (2022). 176(1), 3.

Sundvik, L., & Davis, S. K. (2022). Social media stress and mental health: A brief report on the protective role of emotional intelligence. *Current Psychology*, 1–6.

White-Gosselin, C.-É., & Poulin, F. (2022). Associations between young adults' social media addiction, relationship quality with parents, and internalising problems: A path analysis model. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cbs0000326>

Xie, P., Mu, W., Li, Y., Li, X., & Wang, Y. (2022). The Chinese version of the Digital Stress Scale: Evaluation of psychometric properties. *Current Psychology*, 1–11.