

How Social Media Impact People's Social Contact

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ABSTRACT

Identifying how social media impacts people's behavior is a significant task. Social media is a tool and platform for people to share information, express opinions, and contact each other. But with its convenience, there come some defects in this communication pattern. The results obtained in this research show that, by combining and summarising previous studies on reflection on relationships, social skills, and distraction, when indulged in social media too much, people are more likely to feel lonely, empty, and isolated. Moreover, it could also damage their relationships in actual life. After being exposed to social media, there has been some evidence that some users can develop negative personality traits, such as narcissism, insecurity, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. It can also impact interpersonal relationships; for one thing, some people may find difficulties maintaining a good relationship, while some parents can't forge a good relationship with their children because much of their attention is drawn to social networking apps.

Keywords: social media, FOMO, distraction, reflection, adolescence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a tool and platform that enables people to share information, form opinions, connect individuals and communities, and get people actively involved. Social media is an interactive way for people to create, share and exchange information and views in virtual communities and networks [1]. In addition, social media create highly interactive platforms on mobile devices and the Internet for individuals and communities to share, create, discuss, and modify user-centric content. In China, at the present stage, it mainly includes social networking sites, Weibo, WeChat, Zhihu, QQ, etc.

However, as social networking apps are improved and updated, people seem to communicate with each other. This results in that when waiting for a red light or waiting in a queue, one would feel anxious or fidgeting. Being alone seems like a problem these days; people try to solve it by instant connecting on social networking apps. According to recent studies, until 2021, there were 5.22 billion mobile phone users worldwide and 4.2 billion social media users, which are 53.6% of the world's population. Chinese people spend 5 hours and 22 minutes online every day [2]. To people of all ages, "keeping in touch with friends" remains the top reason for using social media [3]. But connecting only expresses it but doesn't solve it.

As mentioned in Martina Drahošová's study, nearly

50% of respondents feel a loss of social contacts after using social network apps [4]. So, what are the opposing sides social networking apps have brought us in our daily communication? And how does it impact us on both psychological and physical behavior? The analysis of disadvantages of the use of social media has attracted much attention from academia. Many of them discuss the impacts on relationships, psychology, and learning processes. In this paper, I collect many other researchers' different perspectives on the impacts of social media networking apps in the database using the keywords "social media", "reflection on relationship", "social skills", "attention-gaining", "distraction" and sort them in two categories. This study summarizes the influence of social media on people's relationships and attention in previous studies.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 People Reflect Less On Relationship

The sociologist Erving Goffman once suggested that we are all constantly "performing" in our daily lives, presenting different images to different people in different situations. For example, we may speak to our parents in a very different tone of voice and use other words than we do to our classmates and professors. Similarly, we use some disguise on social platforms. The most important part of the disguise is our "features" page

-- we can change the presenting image, modify our text of profile, selectively delete our previous information, etc. That's how people customize their way of communication. When it comes to face-to-face conversation, people can't control what they say; they may slip or make mistakes when making an argument. It's easier to edit, delete, or rethink to remake our sentences to present the self we want others to see. Many people say that they "feel more comfortable when texting online", but along with the convenience, there is some false image that it is easy to communicate, which is not valid. It is found in the reports that college students who use social networking apps for more than 3 hours a day on average are more dependent on mobile network communication, and they are more likely to feel lonely, empty and isolated [5]. People want to be with each other, but they also want to connect to all other places they want. People want to control where they put their attention and make the best use of their time. So while listening to each other, they only want to pay attention to the bits that interest them [6]. Parents text and do mail at breakfast and dinner while their children complain about not having their parents' full attention. Then they also learn from this pattern; they deny each other their full attention. Parental hypochondria is significantly and positively associated with cell phone addiction and negative emotions in adolescents [7].

What should be distinguished is whether can these online communications be counted as real conversation? Maybe not. Although we may be able to send out our salutation or our basic feeling, it can't enable us to see the other's facial expression, gestures or give them a response that they are being related; we can't understand how our relationship goes and how we can develop our social skills. Today, many friendships can be forged on various social networking apps, yet people do have not enough time or energy to render all these connections more intimate.

As a result, social networks are generally built on less tight connections than regular interactions. All social media friends spend time together online, but they don't see each other. This phenomenon damages the existing relationship and hinders those who are most vulnerable in using technology. Especially for adolescents, their natural developing process is interrupted before they learn enough skills to form a sound system. According to a paper in the British academic journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, social network users may have less reflection on their activities and the events around them; they are more likely to develop negative personalities such as narcissism, self-doubt, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. According to a new study from the University of Pittsburgh, heavy users of social media are 2.7 times more likely to suffer from depression. And the University of Michigan study reports that social networks actually "undermine" young people's happiness.

On the other hand, people are becoming more "attention-gaining-oriented", which means they are creating something to gain others' sympathies or strike a chord with their potential audiences. People seek to expose their lives in the public media society, to pursue the right to speak in the public media. People often examine their lives by how to express themselves in the media and even adjust their lives for media expression. Just like "To write a song pretending sadness", to obtain the material of expression in the media society, people will create some actions and emotions purposely at some time [8].

2.2 People's Attention Divert

"Fear of missing out" or "FOMO" is "a pervasive concern that people generally believe that when they are absent, others may be having beneficial experiences" [9]. According to Przybylski et al., people want to be connected to what other people are doing. As a result, they experience FOMO, which Przybylski et al. [10] defined as "the pervasive fear that others might have a beneficial experience because of their absence." [11]. It's also defined as a fear of remorse that what you do now is not the right choice [12], which can lead to a compulsive fear that one might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a new experience, a lucrative investment, or some other satisfying event [13].

It is worth noting that traditional FOMO research focuses more on ubiquitous social environments and emotional tendencies. People may have a strong desire to know others' current situations but cannot achieve this desire due to the lack of necessary tools and means. With the proliferation of smartphones, the chance of "distraction" is increasing. We almost always have our phones with us, so we're used to attending conferences while reading the news. We listen to the teacher's class while secretly playing Taobao. Sherry Turkle, author of "Alone Together," believes that the reason why we enjoy being "multitasking" is inspired by the Goldilocks Principle, which states that we want to be "just right," no more. We want to be with people here and somewhere else in relationships, not too much or too little attention to each area. The essence of this state is our need for control, the sense of security that "I'm not overly committed to any one relationship, and I have plenty of options." And When multitasking involves performing tasks that require multiconsideration, there is always a cost to multitasking: additional individual charges reduce the overall level (i.e. 100%) of attentional resources that would otherwise be allocated to the primary task. Also, Cognitive psychology also holds that the amount of energy available to the human brain is fixed and that the activity of neurons involved in information processing consumes so much power that it can process only a tiny amount of available information in the environment [14].

Sophie Leroy, a professor at the University of Minnesota, has studied people used to multi-tasking [15]. Her experiments found that multitasking is less productive than those who put their phones down for a while, do not check messages or emails, and concentrate on a single task. She thinks that's because people who move between jobs have the problem of attention residue -- when they start something new, they stop thinking about one unfinished business and move on to another, even if it's just a glance at the popup news on their phone. We still have a portion of our mental attention allocated to the previous task. You're more likely to cause an accident if you fidget with your phone when you should be crossing the street or concentrating on driving because it reduces your ability to concentrate.

Over time, sure generations, especially college students, have developed the habit of using smartphones even in class, which may deteriorate over time [16-17].

One study showed that students were disoriented about a third of the time during each class [18]. This requires practical policies to reduce the negative impact of this annoying habit and improve students' responsibilities when using their smartphones in the classroom. Students can be distracted by the constant smartphone reminders and notifications from their studies, so some teachers ask students to turn off their smartphones during class [19]. Some studies have reported that smartphones can distract students' attention when they are turned into a mute mode, which may be worse if they are left in vibrate mode. Feeling the vibration is enough to reduce students' ability to focus on the task [20]. However, the policy may also encourage the fear of not having a mobile phone. The term "nomophobia" refers to the anxiety caused by not being able to use a mobile phone. It also reduces the ability to focus on the task at hand [21].

3. CONCLUSION

The main conclusions can be drawn from this work by combining and summarising previous studies on reflection on relationships, social skills, and distraction.

There are two kinds of disadvantages; firstly, a twisted and underdeveloped personality would occur. People are more likely to feel lonely, empty, and isolated when exposed to social networking apps for a long time. Besides, they can develop negative personality traits such as narcissism, insecurity, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Secondly, fearing missing out on information would take a heavy toll on students' learning process: Smartphone alerts and notifications in class can distract students from learning, which significantly affects efficiency.

On another basis, the time consumed on networking apps can also impact interpersonal relationships. First, one can't build good relationships: because one does not

have enough time or energy to render all these connections into intimate relationships. Nor parents can forge a good relationship with their children because they deny their full attention. Then the children learn from the pattern and become addicted to cell phones.

We learned the defects of social networking apps and could adjust our behavior to avoid them. For example, in class, students could be inspired by professors to take down notes in papers instead of using intelligent devices that can send out distracting information. As for parents, they can reduce the amount of browsing on their phones or laptop to provide a pure place for adolescence to learn and build their relationships with each other. When children and parents have enough communication, they can create a more intimate family environment and increase the child's empathy.

Regarding the lack of reliable data, it could be argued that future investigations are necessary to validate the kinds of conclusions drawn from this study. I believe that apart from looking for distractions social networking apps have brought to students in their learning, some other problems cannot be ignored. More work will need to be done to look for social networking apps' influence on people's independent thinking. And since I only discuss attention-gaining issues among adolescence, further studies could expand the scope to older generations and test their motive for gaining attention.

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