

## A Study on Benefits and Risks of Adolescents Using Social Media

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### **Abstract**

Social media is widely used by children and adolescents, and new research shows that they spend the majority of their daily time on social media platforms. This research tries to demonstrate the beneficial and bad effects that social media has on the development of adolescents. Social media, privacy, youth safety, psychological well-being, and educational achievement are all examined in relation to each other in this review. According to the findings, social media has positively impacted children and adolescents' communication skills, information gathering, technical development, and understanding of how to use new technologies successfully. On the other hand, they're at risk of Facebook sadness, cyberbullying, and online sexual harassment. Some recommendations for future research were included in the study's results.

**Keywords:** social media, Benefits, Risks, Adolescents, Internet, Pro-eating disorder websites, Sexting, social media, Suicide.

### **Introduction:**

Adolescents have access to a number of websites and virtual worlds. Adolescents in this age are more susceptible to peer pressure since they are using mobile phones and the internet to create social networks. According to new research, young people's online and offline behaviour affects bullying and the formation of cliques. In addition, research shows that parents are less attentive to adolescents because of a lack of understanding often influences children's own social media interests, resulting in a lack of synergy between parents.

Use of social media and the internet by adolescents has skyrocketed in the last few years. Adolescents today are more visible online than they have ever been before. Studies show that 95% of 12–17-year-old are online, with 70% checking their email on a daily basis. Many adolescents today have internet-connected devices (such as iPads, smartphones, and video gaming consoles) that allow them to access the internet whenever and wherever they choose. Adolescents' use of social media has grown to be one of their primary means of communication, and it now has become an important part of their everyday life. It's a website that allows people to communicate socially and share ideas with one another [1]. For example, there are social networking sites like Facebook; photo/video sharing sites like Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube; blogging sites like Tumblr; interactive video gaming sites like World of Warcraft or Adolescent Second Life; instant messaging services like Skype and Facebook Messenger; and discussion forums like Reddit or Slack [4]. Adolescents can build online profiles and customise

them with images, videos, quotes, and other content on social networking sites. They can connect to a wider online network by linking their personal page to the pages of other users, referred to as "friends." Seventy-six percent of all adolescents are active on social media. 60% of users do it on a daily basis, and 41% of users have accounts on more than one social media platform. Older adolescents, particularly girls, are more likely to use social media [5]. Girls are more likely to use these networks to keep in touch with old acquaintances, while boys are more likely to flirt and meet new people on them. Many advantages accrue to youth from the use of social media, among them the ability to stay in touch with old pals. At the same time, many people are concerned about social media websites' impact on s' health and development. This review's goal is to give readers a comprehensive picture of the potential benefits and drawbacks of social media use. Mental health professionals must understand how and why kids use these sites and the potential harm they do to their mental health and well-being [6].

### **Literature Review:**

Social media offers a wide range of advantages and chances to empower the user. Adolescents can retain social relationships and support networks using social media that would otherwise be impossible to maintain. According to Krishna (2009), social media gives adolescents easy access to information while maintaining their anonymity. Adolescents will be able to learn more about their health issues thanks to a new smartphone app. However, parents must be present while their children use the internet in order to ensure the success of early learning in social media, so that children use credible online resources, analyse information appropriately, and do not feel overwhelmed by the volume of information they read online.

Cyberbullying poses the greatest threat to adolescents on social media, and it has the potential to escalate to criminal activity. Because of the ease with which false information and hate speech may be shared on social media, it can be used to spread hatred and incite resentment among young people intentionally. Among the dangers that kids face are peer connections, inappropriate content spreading, a lack of understanding of internet privacy issues, and the influence of advertising. Almost every has shared or received images or videos of themselves either naked or semi-naked. Some adolescents who have amassed or distributed pornographic material containing naked or seminaked images or videos may be charged with offences related to child pornography.

Sexting is one of the social media influences, according to Lenhart (2009), and people should be highly conscious of it. However, in some cases, researchers have discovered a brand-new phenomenon known as Facebook depression, which is characterised by classic depressive symptoms appearing in young people who spend time on social media sites like Facebook.

They claim that for some s, social media can be a trigger for depression (Davila & Sturm, 2009 & 2010). It is especially important to watch out for youths who are at high risk of developing depression due to social isolation, hazardous sexual practices, or violent, destructive behaviour. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of online sites when their personal information is jeopardised. They have no regard for privacy and often offer or post misleading information about themselves or others. Adolescents themselves utilise technology incorrectly. People who browse websites, according to Palfrey (2010), can readily be traced. Adolescents must understand that their digital footprint significantly impacts their future and that their competitors can simply monitor their adventures. "It recommends that young people respect privacy issues and the adverse impacts of

publishing a picture, they are not aware of privacy issues often sending vulgar images, messages and videos without realising that what happens online stays online."

Ads are no longer permitted on several websites accessed by children and adolescents. When youngsters use online social media, parents are responsible for making sure they can grow into healthy adolescents without being harmed by deceptive advertising.

### **Social Media:**

Internet-based applications built on Web 2.0's conceptual and technological basis, such as social media, enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media is built on the concept of social interaction, which allows users to express themselves and learn from one another in a worldwide arena where distance and time don't matter. Web 2.0 consists of social networks and communities such as Pirate Bay and My Space, blogs and sites where the users themselves create the content, e.g. Facebook. Web 2.0 is the foundation upon which social media is built (Carlsson, 2010). It's well known that Web 2.0 refers to websites that: (a) rely on user participation rather than centrally managed content providers; (b) aggregate and remix content from a variety of sources; and (c) more intensively connect users and content. Social media platforms such as blogs, microblogging sites (like Twitter), media sharing sites (like YouTube), social bookmarking sites (like StumbleUpon) and bulletin boards have been recognised by Kreutzer and Hinz (2010) as different types of media platforms (e.g. Facebook). In addition to Second Life, World of Warcraft, and collaborative projects like Wikipedia, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) include virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life) and virtual gaming worlds (e.g. Furthermore, these websites provide entertainment and communication chances for young people [2]. Since using various types of social media has become a common activity, research shows that it benefits children and adolescents by enhancing communication and social connection as well as technical abilities. The number of preadolescents and adolescents using these sites has risen considerably in recent years.

### **The Benefits of Adolescents in Using social media:**

The interactive platform of social media allows users to engage with one another to create social relationships and share information and knowledge about real-life needs and pursuits. Adolescents, in particular, devote a significant portion of their time to socialising. Adolescents' use of social media coincides with the development of their identity, sexuality, and physical and moral well-being. According to recent research, adolescents who have improved their communication skills have reaped some benefits. At the same time, their social and emotional lives have improved, which significantly impacts their growth. Adolescents can use social media to explore several aspects of culture, such as romance, friendship, and social status. They can also share and discuss their musical preferences, television and movie expertise, video game knowledge, and other facets of culture.

#### **• Socialisation and Communication:**

Adolescents can meet various online duties important to their offline lives by using social networking sites, such as lying about friends and family, making new acquaintances, sharing images, and exchanging ideas. Adolescents who use social media may gain a broader perspective on themselves, their peers, and the rest of the world. As a result, young adults who spend more time on Facebook are better at displaying "virtual empathy" for their online pals. Again, social media sites enable adolescents

to perform numerous online chores that are equally important to them on and off the internet: staying in touch with friends and family, making new ones, swapping photos and ideas.

- **Accessing Health Information:**

Online health information is readily available to adolescents and can be accessed anonymously. Excellent health materials are increasingly available to young people on a wide range of interesting issues, such as sexually transmitted illnesses, stress reduction, and depression symptoms. In order to get more information and have a more in-depth discussion about this topic, parents should be encouraged to become more knowledgeable about their children's online access.

According to Lenhart et al. (2010), 31% of internet youth obtain health, dietary, or physical fitness information as a result of their online searches. About one-fifth of kids who access the internet say they use it to research private health issues like drug usage and sexual health.

- **Enhanced Learning Opportunities:**

Different research has been done on the effects of social media as a result of the findings noticed when individuals use media and new technologies that have evolved. Many academics believe that children learn in new ways through social media, and that instructors should take advantage of these new tools. Students in middle and high school use social media to collaborate on group assignments and schoolwork. It's been shown that using blogs as a teaching tool can help students improve their written communication abilities as well as their creativity. Additionally, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter allow students to connect outside of the classroom to collaborate on projects and share ideas. Using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter can be a powerful tool for engaging young pupils in learning.

**Risks of using social media:**

In addition to the advantages, social media poses dangers to young people. If a child is using the internet before the legal age of consent, they put themselves and their parents in danger. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA, 1998), passed by Congress in 1998, set the age at which websites can no longer collect personally identifiable information about children under the age of 13 without their consent parents' agreement. Children should be respected for their age, according to the AAP. Because of this, some pres and parents have taken to making up age differences to get an advantage, although doing so puts their children's safety at danger.

Around half of all 11-16-year-olds, according to the EU (2014) report, have encountered one or more of the ten risks we asked about. In countries like Denmark, Italy, and Romania, where the number of females and young children has recently risen, the changes between 2010 and 2014 show that youngsters are now exposed to additional hazards and opportunities (and, less, in Ireland). Children now enjoy more internet activities without a corresponding increase in risk in Belgium, Portugal, and the UK, as well. There are, therefore, no differences in the dangers that adolescents experience online and offline.

- **Privacy Concerns and the Digital Footprint:**

Pres and adolescents are at risk from each other, from the incorrect use of technology, from loss of privacy, from sharing excessive amounts of information, or from posting false information about themselves on the internet nowadays. This type of action puts their privacy at risk. When people use

the internet, they can leave traces of where they've been on the web. The term "digital footprint" refers to a person's cumulative, ongoing record of their online activities. Leaving a digital footprint and building a future reputation on social media sites is a huge risk for adolescents and young adults. The younger generation is typically unaware of privacy issues and will publish indecent photos, videos, and messages without realising that "what goes on the Internet stays.". This means untrained and hasty mouse clicks could jeopardise future employment and college admission.

- **Sexting:**

There are several types of sexual harassment, ranging from demeaning words to unwanted sexual approaches and outright assault. Unwanted online sexual solicitation is defined as "the act of persuading someone to talk about sex, to do something sexual, or to provide intimate sexual information even when that person does not want to" Sexting can be defined as "the act of sending, receiving, or transferring sexually explicit texts, photographs, or images using a mobile phone, computer, or other digital device." According to research done across the globe, this issue is prevalent among adolescents. In their study, Livingston and Bober (2004) found that while many youngsters acknowledge to having been exposed to pornography, only a tiny percentage of parents are aware of their children's exposure to it. Online harassment is more common among children than their parents realise, as evidenced by the longer daily usage hours reported by children [7]. According to a Washington, D.C., survey conducted in 2008, 20% of kids have sent or uploaded naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves (National Campaign to Prevent Adolescent and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008). Sexual solicitation between young people of the same age is far more common than sexual predation, and most of these solicitations occur from young people of the same age who are familiar with each other offline (Collins, 2011). One-fifth of 11-16-year-olds in nations in the European Union claim they've received "sexual messages or photographs" from peers, and three-fifths say they've sent or posted similar communications themselves.

- **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:**

Cyberbullying is described as someone or a group purposefully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to harass or threaten another person or group repeatedly by emailing or publishing nasty text and/or graphics through technical means. An individual or group using electronic or digital media to regularly transmit angry or aggressive messages with the intent of causing harm to others is engaging in cyberbullying [3]. This activity often extends beyond a person's school grounds and follows the victim into their home. By receiving threatening, harassing, or humiliating messages from another adolescent, social media use presents a possibility for emotional discomfort. Adolescents and preadolescents are particularly vulnerable to this danger. The prevalence of cyberbullying is similar to that of traditional forms of bullying, and current research suggests that online harassment is less widespread than traditional forms of harassment. Additionally, cyberbullying can affect any young person who is online, and it can have serious psychological consequences like despair, anxiety, social isolation, and ultimately, suicide. Seventy-two percent of secondary school pupils studied by Monash University reported receiving unwanted or unpleasant contact from strangers via their social networking profiles. In comparison to traditional bullying, cyberbullying has been demonstrated to generate greater levels of sadness and anxiety in its victims. It has also been linked to incidences of adolescent suicide, with adolescents known to read unpleasant comments a few days

prior to their suicide attempt. Adolescents who are most vulnerable to cyberbullying are also those most vulnerable to offline harms, such as those who have been sexually or physically abused or those raised in unstable homes [9].

- **Social Media and Suicide:**

In an age where cell phones and social media are the primary means of communicating, Adolescents are more prone than ever to utilise this technology to express themselves, including thoughts of suicide. Suicidal ideation can be expressed on these platforms, and there are countless examples of people who published their suicidal intent and planned on social media before taking their own lives. Adolescents who share suicidal concerns via social media or text messages have been seen by psychiatrists in the emergency room or admitted to a mental facility. These messages or posts are frequently discovered by a peer, who then informs an adult, who then informs the suicidal adolescent's parent or school officials of their discovery. There are only a handful of research investigations looking into this brand-new occurrence. Belfort and colleagues (2012) analysed the records of adolescents who were hospitalised to an ER with a primary complaint of suicidality and found that the majority of these adolescents expressed suicidality vocally or by gestures threatening to hurt themselves. In contrast, youths who discussed their suicidal thoughts in a handwritten note were more likely to do so with a peer than those who used technology (instant messaging, blog entries, emails, social media postings, or text messages). Sixty-seven percent of those who sent suicide-related electronic messages did it to a peer, compared to only 33 percent who sent it to an adult. Only 3% of those who used written notes did so with a peer, yet 93% did it with an adult. This raises the issue of suicide thoughts being first heard from peers as kids continue to use technology. And this raises the alarm. What happens next is a mystery. Some adolescents have notified adults when they get these alarming electronic messages, as documented by the media. However, there are instances in which adolescents fail to inform an adult. Suicidal youth may be less likely to receive urgent care if their peers are the first to know. According to their findings, this could be the case (2012).

**The Role of the Clinician:**

Mental health professionals can play a critical role in teaching adolescents and their families about the consequences of inappropriate or excessive use of social media. Physicians' specific position necessitates that we become well-versed in this new technology and learn all there is to know about it. Adolescents' use of technology should be better understood. Each should undergo a clinical interview that includes questions about their use of the internet and social media. Clinicians can begin by inquiring about the adolescent's use of various technology. It's critical to learn about the many social networking platforms your frequents and what they are using them for. It's also critical to learn how much time people spend on these websites and how often they go there. It's vital to know how the behaves online, especially if they're doing anything unsafe or inappropriate. If the adolescent appears to be portraying an alternate persona or an idealised version of themselves on social media, this should be considered. Adolescents can be invited to share their online profiles with the clinician, who can then view them together while they are in the office. Discussing online behaviours will be easier now that this is available as a resource. It's crucial to keep in mind that some adolescents may be reluctant to divulge details of their online activities because they consider them private. While discussing

confidentiality with s, clinicians can reassure them that their parents will not be alerted about the adolescent's online activities against their consent unless there are acute safety concerns.

Clinicians should assess adolescents for dangerous online behaviours such as sexting and cyberbullying [8]. Any time the doctor finds out about these actions or learns that the adolescent is the victim of cyberbullying, it's critical to look into the psychological effects on him or her, including whether or not they cause or worsen depression, substance addiction or suicidality. Clinicians should examine whether or whether self-harming and eating disorder behaviours are reinforced or encouraged in adolescents who use online communities. An additional consideration is whether or not these websites serve any purpose other than to encourage people to engage in risky activities.

### **Conclusion:**

Adolescents who use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter get numerous advantages. One of the first benefits that social media can provide is an increase in the accessibility of information and the ease of communicating both in the real world and virtually. Another reason is that social media opens up more creative areas for children and adolescents, who are then inspired to study more by interacting with others on social media and in virtual worlds. With social media, you can connect with people all over the world, meet people who share interests, and share information with ease. There are numerous ways to gain access to social media on a worldwide scale. Although cyber inconsistencies can have a positive impact, it can also have a detrimental impact, giving rise to criminal beliefs ranging from hate speech to pornography actions and so on in some situations. In addition, these technologies supply information that can improve health care, as adolescents can look for valuable information, although parental engagement is required. Even when used for good, social media can have a detrimental effect, such as contributing to despair. In addition, a lack of supervision can lead to online privacy addiction, hazardous data storage, not secure alias Hoaxes, or incorrect information. Social media activity by youngsters should be monitored and controlled by parents. It is suggested that parents supervise their children while they use social media and teach them how to do it safely and appropriately. Parents should keep an eye on their children's use of Internet media and make sure their children comprehend the programme (software used to monitor the internet when the absence of parents).

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