

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE

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Abstract

Social media has become an essential part of students' daily lives, influencing communication, education, and personal development. While these platforms provide valuable educational resources and opportunities for social interaction, excessive use may negatively affect students' self-confidence and psychological well-being. This paper examines both the positive and negative effects of social media on students' self-confidence and discusses practical strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline activities. The study emphasizes the importance of responsible social media use and effective time management in promoting students' mental well-being.

Introduction

In the digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Telegram, and YouTube allow users to communicate, access educational materials, share experiences, and obtain information instantly. Students, in particular, spend a considerable amount of time using these platforms for both academic and personal purposes. Although social media offers numerous educational benefits, excessive use may negatively influence students' self-confidence, academic performance, and mental health. Constant exposure to idealized lifestyles and unrealistic standards may encourage unhealthy comparisons and reduce self-esteem. Therefore, understanding both the advantages and disadvantages of social media is essential.

Main Discussion

The twenty-first century is often described as the age of technology. Rapid developments in artificial intelligence, information technology, and digital communication have transformed education and everyday life. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for learning, collaboration, and communication. Students use social media to participate in online classes, access educational videos, read electronic books, communicate with classmates, and exchange academic ideas. According to Akram and Kumar (2017), social networking sites provide numerous educational benefits by enabling students to learn from experts regardless of geographical location or educational background.

Facebook, created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, revolutionized online communication by connecting millions of users worldwide. Similarly, Instagram, developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, has become one of the most popular platforms for sharing photos and short videos. Researchers have also identified several psychological benefits of social networking. Facebook and similar platforms can increase social connectedness, improve communication, and provide emotional support during difficult times. They are particularly beneficial for introverted students, who often find online communication less stressful than face-to-face interaction.

However, despite these advantages, excessive social media use has several negative consequences. One of the most significant problems is excessive social comparison. Students frequently compare their appearance, achievements, lifestyles, and financial status with carefully edited content shared by influencers and other users. Such comparisons may reduce self-confidence, increase dissatisfaction with one's life, and contribute to anxiety and stress. Another major concern is time management. Many students begin their day by checking notifications, messages, Instagram, TikTok, or other applications instead of focusing on productive activities. Akram and Kumar (2017) note that excessive social media use often leads to time wastage, reduced concentration, and delayed completion of academic tasks. Heavy use of short-form videos may also reduce attention span and make sustained concentration on reading or studying more difficult. Instead of conducting independent research, some students rely entirely on information obtained through social media, which may weaken their critical thinking and research skills.

The growing use of artificial intelligence in social media has introduced another challenge. AI-generated images and videos often create unrealistic beauty standards and lifestyles that are difficult to achieve in real life. Consequently, some students develop unrealistic expectations and become less satisfied with themselves, negatively affecting their self-confidence.

Methodology and Recommendations

To minimize the negative effects of social media while maintaining its educational benefits, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Effective Time Management

Students should regulate their daily social media usage using methods such as the Pomodoro Technique, which alternates focused study sessions with short breaks. Setting screen-time limits can also improve productivity.

2. Reading Books Regularly

Reading books strengthens memory, vocabulary, critical thinking, and imagination. Unlike short social media content, books encourage deep concentration and improve intellectual development, contributing to greater self-confidence.

3. Avoiding Social Comparison

Students should recognize that social media often presents idealized versions of reality. Comparing oneself with online personalities can create unrealistic expectations and lower self-esteem. Instead, individuals should focus on their own personal growth and achievements.

4. Developing Digital Literacy

Students should learn to evaluate online content critically, recognize misinformation, and understand how algorithms influence what they see. Digital literacy helps users make healthier choices while using social media.

Conclusion

Social media has both positive and negative influences on students' self-confidence. It provides valuable educational opportunities, facilitates communication, and enables students to access knowledge from around the world. However, excessive use may lead to poor time management, reduced academic performance, unhealthy social comparison, and decreased self-confidence.

Students should therefore use social media responsibly and in moderation. Educational institutions and families should also promote digital literacy and healthy online habits. By

maintaining a balanced approach, students can benefit from social media while protecting their psychological well-being and developing stronger self-confidence.

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