THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Makhmasoliyeva Shakhnozabonu Alisher qizi
A student, Navoi State University
Supervisor: ***Khujaeva Umida Mahmud qizi***
A teacher, Navoi State University
umidaxujayeva@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24184756

Abstract: *Social media has become an important part of young people's everyday lives, influencing how they communicate, learn, build relationships and understand themselves. This article examines both the opportunities and challenges associated with social media use among adolescents and young adults. It draws on published research, including reports by the World Health Organization and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, as well as psychological research reviews. The discussion considers the educational and social benefits of online platforms, alongside concerns about excessive use, sleep, self-image, cyberbullying and exposure to unreliable information. The review indicates that social media should not be treated as entirely harmful or entirely beneficial: its effects vary according to the content users encounter, their personal circumstances and the way platforms are used. The article argues that digital literacy, self-regulation, supportive guidance and responsible platform design are essential. It concludes that a balanced approach can help young people benefit from digital communication while protecting their well-being and real-life relationships.*
Keywords: *social media; young people; adolescents; digital literacy; mental well-being; online communication*

Annotatsiya: *Ijtimoiy tarmoqlar yoshlarning kundalik hayotining muhim qismiga aylanib, ularning muloqoti, ta'lim olishi, munosabatlar o'rnatishi va o'ziga bo'lgan qarashlariga ta'sir ko'rsatmoqda. Ushbu maqolada ijtimoiy tarmoqlardan foydalanishning o'smirlar va yoshlar uchun ijobiy imkoniyatlari hamda ehtimoliy xavflari tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil Jahon sog'liqni saqlash tashkiloti, AQSh Milliy fanlar, muhandislik va tibbiyot akademiyalari hisobotlari hamda ilmiy tadqiqotlar sharhlariga asoslanadi. Maqolada onlayn platformalarning ta'lim va muloqotdagi foydasi bilan bir qatorda, me'yordan ortiq foydalanish, uyqu sifati, o'zini boshqalar bilan solishtirish, kiberbulling va ishonchsiz axborot muammolari ko'rib chiqiladi. Tahlil natijalari ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning ta'siri bir xil emasligini: u foydalanuvchining shaxsiy xususiyatlari, ko'rayotgan kontenti va foydalanish odatlariga bog'liqligini ko'rsatadi. Maqolada raqamli savodxonlik, o'zini boshqarish, ota-ona va pedagoglar ko'magi hamda platformalarning mas'uliyatli dizayni muhim ekani ta'kidlanadi.*
Kalit so'zlar: *ijtimoiy tarmoqlar; yoshlar; o'smirlar; raqamli savodxonlik; ruhiy farovonlik; onlayn muloqot*

INTRODUCTION

Social media is now part of the social, educational and cultural environment in which young people grow up. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Telegram and Facebook enable instant communication, sharing and access to information. For students, they also offer informal learning opportunities, including language practice, educational videos and discussions. However, constant access raises questions about

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

concentration, privacy, well-being and reliable information. The relationship between social media and young people's well-being is complex. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2023) explains that social media is not automatically beneficial or harmful; its effects depend on the user, the content and the context. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2024) similarly recommend considering both opportunities and risks. This article reviews the main positive and negative influences of social media and considers ways to encourage responsible use.

Positive contributions of social media

One important advantage of social media is easier communication. Young people can stay in touch with relatives and friends who live far away, organise activities and find communities based on shared interests. Online interaction may be especially helpful for those who feel isolated or struggle to find like-minded people in their local environment. The APA (2023) notes that supportive online companionship can contribute to healthy socialisation. Social media can also support learning. Teachers, educational organisations and specialists share explanations, short lessons and language-learning materials. A student learning English, for example, can listen to different accents, practise vocabulary and communicate with other learners. Such activities do not replace classroom teaching, but they can reinforce it and encourage independent study. In addition, exposure to different cultures may broaden young people's perspectives.

Risks and challenges

Problems may arise when social media use becomes excessive or difficult to control. Time spent scrolling can reduce the time available for homework, exercise, hobbies and face-to-face conversations. Phone use late at night may also disturb sleep. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (2024), using data from almost 280,000 young people in 44 countries and regions, reported that signs of problematic social media behaviour increased from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022. This does not mean that every frequent user has a problem, but it highlights the importance of recognising habits that interfere with everyday life. Another concern is online comparison. Users often post selected photographs and achievements rather than everyday difficulties. Their lives may therefore appear unusually attractive or successful. Young people who compare their appearance, possessions or popularity with these images may become dissatisfied with themselves. A systematic review and meta-analysis by Fassi et al. (2024), covering 143 studies and more than one million adolescents, found associations between social media use and internalising symptoms such as anxiety and depression. This is evidence of a relationship, not proof that social media alone causes these symptoms. Cyberbullying and misinformation are further challenges. Hurtful comments and humiliating posts can affect young people beyond school hours. Misleading information can also spread when users share posts without checking their sources. In addition, photographs, location details and other personal data may be copied or used in unexpected ways. Safe participation therefore requires critical thinking, privacy awareness and respect for others.

Discussion and recommendations

The key question is not simply whether young people should use social media, but how they can use it in ways that support their development. First, they should notice how online habits affect their daily routines. If checking applications interrupts study, reduces sleep or creates distress, users can set time limits, disable unnecessary notifications and take breaks. Keeping phones away during lessons, family conversations and bedtime may also protect attention. Second, digital literacy should be strengthened. Young people need to check the author and date of a post, compare claims with reliable sources, recognise manipulated images and report harmful content. They should understand privacy settings and think before sharing personal information. The APA (2023) recommends age-appropriate guidance and

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

education while recognising the importance of young people's growing need for privacy and independence. Responsibility should also be shared. Parents and teachers can discuss online experiences openly rather than relying only on punishment or bans. Schools can teach digital citizenship and media literacy. Technology companies also have a role in improving safety, transparency and age-appropriate design (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2024).

Personal perspective

In my opinion, social media is a tool, and its value depends largely on how people use it. Young people do not need to reject technology completely: it can help them stay connected, learn independently and discover new opportunities. However, online approval should never become the main measure of personal value. The number of likes or followers cannot show a person's abilities, kindness or potential. I believe balance is more meaningful than simply counting minutes. Two people may spend the same amount of time online but have very different experiences: one may be learning a language or talking to supportive friends, while the other may be comparing themselves with strangers. Young people should therefore ask not only how long they are online, but also what they do there and how it makes them feel. Real conversations, reading, exercise and time with family remain essential.

Conclusion

Social media offers opportunities for communication, learning and social support. However, excessive or uncritical use may contribute to disrupted routines, negative self-comparison, cyberbullying, misinformation and privacy risks. Research indicates that outcomes depend on individuals, content and patterns of use. A balanced approach combines self-regulation, digital literacy, supportive guidance and safer platform design. Social media should serve young people's goals rather than control their time, attention or self-worth.

References

1. American Psychological Association. (2023). Health advisory on social media use in adolescence. https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use
2. Fassi, L., Thomas, K., Parry, D. A., Leyland-Craggs, A., Ford, T. J., & Orben, A. (2024). Social media use and internalizing symptoms in clinical and community adolescent samples: A systematic review and meta-analysis. JAMA Pediatrics, 178(8), 814–822. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.2078
3. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2024). Social media and adolescent health. The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/27396
4. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. (2024). A focus on adolescent social media use and gaming in Europe, central Asia and Canada: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children international report from the 2021/2022 survey (Volume 6). https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289061322

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.