Social Media and Mental Health: A Systematic Review on the Impact of Social Media on Adolescence Mental Health

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Adolescent is a unique and formative period in someone life. Moreover, it is a crucial time to maintain social and emotional development and easy to expose to risk factors. The evolutions of digital technologies have become a universal feature of adolescence lives. The usage of social media is one of the most common features of today's adolescents. Being socially connected with other people is a common phenomenon, be it in family, or at school or even at social gathering, adolescents are in constant touch with their peers through social media account. Social media sites attract the adolescent to upload pictures, images, and videos in its platform. It also enables the adolescents to make friends, exchange ideas, develop new interest and experiment with new forms of self expression. These sites not only does allows its users to share but also allows people to like, comments on it, without any restriction. Often, this serve as risk for the adolescents, as it can encourage trolling from peers. Sarcastic comments have become a part and parcel of adolescents on social media sites. Adolescents often gets involve in trolling for fun without realizing the dangerous affect that it could bring. Trolling on these sites revolves around body shaming, skills of individuals, language and lifestyle among others. The consequences of such trolling may make someone vulnerable to stress, depression, anxiety, loneliness and suicidal thought. The authors through review of existing literature present the impact of social media on the adolescent wellbeing and suggest intervention and prevention strategies at individual, family and community level.

Key words: Social Media, Mental health, Trolls, Adolescent, Stress, Depression, Suicidal thought

Introduction:

Social media sites have rapidly evolved as young people's preferred avenue for communication. Whether at home or school, today's adolescents are surrounded by social media or digital media. Social media is the integration of digital media including combination of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structured computerized environment that allows people to interact with one another. It is the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community based input, interaction, content- sharing and collaboration. Social media can take the form of a verity of tech- enabled activities, such as photo sharing, blogging, social gamming, social networks, video sharing, business networks, or reviews among others. By design, social media is internet based and offers users easy electronic communication of personal information and other content, such as videos and photos. Social media originated as a tool that people used to interact with friends and family but was later adopted by businesses that wanted to take advantage of a popular new communication method to reach out to customers. The power of social media is the ability to connect and share information with anyone on as long as they also use social media.

Adolescence and social media:

Social media has become an integral part of young people's lives. They are in constant communication with their peers through social media sites. Adolescents have embraced social media sites as part of their life, which offer them opportunities not only to consume but also to create and share content. Compare to their parents, adolescence are early adopters of technology. They require no instructional manual to use social media sites as they are exposed daily to these sites through their peers. Steinberg (2011) opined that during adolescence, young people develop a unified sense of self and belonging. They become aware of who they are and where they belong to. While striving for independence and autonomy from their parents, feedback from peers grows in importance. Social media sites therefore, may play an important role as theses online platform revolves around one's personal profile, they offer young people a platform to present themselves (Peter and Valkenburg 2011).

With the development of Information and communication technology (ICT), digital technologies have undoubtedly become popular among adolescence. Easy access to these sites has increase the time spent on such platform. Time spent on social media has also been associated with a number of behavioural, social and mental health outcomes. According to L.Y. Lin et al... (2016) high amounts of times on social media l have been associated with increased depression, particularly when such use becomes problematic. Problematic social media use involves addiction like symptoms including feeling of withdrawal when unable to use, mood modification or using social media to forget about real life, and problems from neglecting important responsibilities due to social media use (Lemmens, Valkenburg &Peter, 2009)

Social media and mental health:

Social networking sites are generally being used by adolescences to keep in contact and be accepted by their peer members. The feeling of being accepted is an important characteristic of the adolescence life. One of the most important features of social media sites is the able to create one's own profile. In the words of Siibak (2009) a profile page offers an online stage where user can, beside communication with others, also divulge personal data in written and visual form. Because of this there is an increase amount of self-disclosure online. Young people's disclosure of personal information when constructing online profile and sharing significant life experience raise concerns, as personal information may be misused. As a result, references of dejection or despondent behaviours are common with social media usage. Lenhart et al. (2001) opined that adolescence reports that they are better able to express themselves authentically online due to the anonymity they feel.

Nicholas Carr in his book "The Shallows: what the internet is doing to our brain" (2011) argued that social media can harm our capacity for concentration and contemplation as well as our ability to store and recall information. Quoting his words, "What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. Whether I'm online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski… When I mention my troubles with reading to friends, many say they're suffering from similar afflictions. The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing. Some worry they're becoming chronic scatterbrains".

Pantic (2012), in his study disclosed that that the time spent on online social media by high school students were positively correlated with depression. Similarly, Rosen Whaling, Rab, Carrier, and Cheever (2013), stated that participants who spent more time online and those who performed more facebook, whatsapp messenger, telegram, you tube and viber evidenced a more clinical symptoms of major depression. Davila et al., (2009) and Selfhout et al., (2009) proposed a new type of depression, termed "social media depression" which develops when preteens and teens spend long periods on social media sites and then begin to experience symptoms of depression.

Cyberbullying

Bullying is a serious public health concern that is associated with significant negative mental, social and physical outcome. Ringrose (2015) Bullying can be defined as intentional behaviour to harm another, repeatedly, where it is difficult for victim to defend himself or herself. It assume as imbalance of power. According to Smith (2008) It is an act or behaviour by electronic means against a certain group or an individual rapidly and over time online. Cyber bullying leads to lower self esteem, emotional alienation, poor school attendance, poor learning outcomes and diminished capacity to form relationship. Cyber bullying impact is magnified by invasion of the private domain (Price & Dalgleish, 2010,) so as to seem inescapable, in the words

of Tokunaga (2010), it "follows you home from school". In the context of Information Communication and Technology, bullying presents itself in multiple forms, through the dissemination of threatening or derogatory comments, rumours, and offensive and embarrassing pictures or videos on social networking sites, or by SMS (texting), e-mail, and chat (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). The incidence of online bullying via mobile phones is on the rise (Görzig & Frumkin, 2013). Weinstein and Selman (2014,) claim that online impersonation, personal attacks, public shaming, and humiliation represent social "meanness and cruelty" moving into the digital space. In short, digital tools offer powerful, yet potentially damaging ways for young people to communicate and respond.

Interaction with peer is one of the components of adolescence development. Adolescents peer experience play a critical role, be it with the social media environment or the societal environment. Within the social media environment, peer interactions can occur with increased frequency, immediacy and intensity. The experiences of being a victim of bullying or trolls by peers online, is consistently found with higher rates of self harm and suicidal behaviour. Thus, social media have become a key expressive tool for youth where they may express signs and symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation.

Social media and suicide:

Suicide is a worldwide public health problem among adolescence. According to Global Statistic for youth suicide 2005, (15-19 years) it shows that suicide is the second most common cause of death only after traffic accidents. According to Skinner and McFaull (2012), there are a number of identified risk factors for suicidal ideation and these include social factors such as bullying or break ups, pre-existing mental health problems and alcohol or drugs abuse. The American Foundation for suicide prevention in its studies in 2012, identified depression and loneliness as the most influential risk factors for adolescence suicide.

Being lonely in adolescence may not only include feeling of being alienated from peers but also the feeling of having failed critical task of being socially connected. To describe the sense of that one does not belong to or feel connected; Lasgaard (2011) uses the term "thwarted belongingness". When an individual experiences depression, people tends to respond negatively to such individuals, this in turn increases the depressed individual's feelings of loneliness.

The accessibililiy and searchability characteristic of social media influence the adolescences to a great deal. The easily access of social media sites can influence users in a great deal. Biddle et al. (2008) opined that social media increase the risk for youth suicide. Social media can offer a "how to" dictionary for youth considering suicide. Studies conducted by Apter (2010) and Hawton et al.(2012) found that some internet sites do promote suicide. Since these sites promotes and support the act of suicide they are often address as "pro-suicide' websites, social media or chat rooms.

Social media sites widen the social environment because of its connectivity feature. An individual can reach out to any part of the globe through social media sites. This feature may or can cause suicide contagion; when others learn and mimic suicide behaviour through social modelling. Robertson et al (2012) an adolescent's friends are influential in terms of social modelling with respect to suicidal behaviour and social media may increase the size of person's circle of influence, thus resulting in an increase in suicide cluster.

Methodology:

The systematic review was carried out from those paper and books that were published between 2005 to 2011. The research domain is social science. The data bases for the searched literature were Google scholar and research gate. For the paper six books and eight articles were reviewed.

Discussion:

With the increasing affordability of smart phones today, the society is witnessing a dramatic change in how youth access and use media technologies and content. Through these smart phones the youth can get easy access to information, can connect to an unknown person, be bullied and appreciated for a picture, and also get aces to pornography. What made this freighting is that all these can be done by the youth without the knowledge of the Parents or an adult. For adolescence, social media creates avenues for them to engage in meaningful interaction and present themselves to a large audience. Social media at times presents a beautiful view of life, and this may add pressure for others to keep up. Therefore, there is a need for the creation of holistic policies to address issues like cyber bullying, trolls, memes etc. which can increase mental health issues like depression, loneliness and social isolation.

Digital literacy is another area that where the society can focus to address the present health hazards. Adolescents are often addressed as 'digital native' because of how they use social media. When it comes to social media they are more trained then their parents in social media usage. Educational institute does not promote the usage of social media sites by their students. Therefore, there is a need of inclusion of social media sites usage and internet etiquette in the curriculum. Curriculum should address issues like how to deal with depression, trolls and maintain their privacy. Privacy is important for staying healthy, both physically and mentally (Margulis 2003). The monitoring of social networking sites by suicide prevention agencies would allow detection of conversations after a suicide that might give cause for concern. It was evident that social media sites could record information like a personal journal, demonstrating mood patterns and activities over a period of time. Such online journals can be useful for detecting escalation of mental health problems, such as depression.

Conclusion:

The development of communication & information technology has brought about a series of change in the life style of the young. Glued through their smart phone, the young are able to access information across the globe. This sharing of information has been made possible due to social media sites. In spite of its positive outlooks social media sites also brings in a lot of fear psychosis. As educators, we constantly need to look into those issues that affect the young. There is a need to impart social media education among the young so that we can utilize it in a positive way.

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