Composition 1

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Negatives of Social Media

It’s not difficult to comprehend that social media has become a fundamental part of the way the world communicates on a daily basis. From Instagram to Facebook, people all around the world interact with these different platforms. Since people have control of what others see in their hands, it can lead to anyone weaving together how they are perceived and how their life looks like to the world. But behind the false realities of the filters and captions lay a couple of difficulties that a few people face with these addicting and popular applications. Social media is affecting people’s mental health, physical health and social life by establishing a culture of comparison, causes a lack of sleep, and increases social isolation. Several authors emphasize this statement by backing up with facts, stories, and studies relating to mental health, physical health, social life and social media usage.

The people who mindlessly scroll on social media platforms tend to believe that those who they see online lead better lives, and that leads to comparing. A person who is trapped in this loop cannot get out since they might automatically assume how someone portrays their life online is better than theirs. Psychology Today, a popular psychology publication, calls this “The Comparison Trap”. The article explains how some people, who spend their free time on social media, are bound to feel bad about themselves after perceiving their life as not as great as their peers on social media platforms. Mitch Prinstein, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina, states that depression is a result of constant comparison from social media, “When we're reliant on others for our sense of self, only feeling good if we get positive feedback or markers of status, we're at risk for depression," (Prinstein). Social media can take a huge negative toll on one’s mental health unless they reach out of this hole of being stuck in comparing each other’s lives. A recent study at Princeton University showed results from a study that resulted in low body image feedback correlated with time spent on social media. Instagram, the extremely popular photo sharing app for example is known for having people obsessive over the number of engagements they received. According to a study done by Harvard University, dopamine is released when people see more engagements on their social media accounts,“Cognitive neuroscientists have shown that rewarding social stimuli—laughing faces, positive recognition by our peers, messages from loved ones—activate the same dopaminergic reward pathways”(Haynes). When a person sees how many likes they get on a photo, or comments their brain can release the chemical dopamine, which can satisfy them and creates a drive to keep on obsessing over what makes their self esteem go up. But with low numbers of engagements the self esteem can go down. With that being said, social media does play a role with low self esteem for people in the world who are constantly using Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and many more social media platforms.

Constant use of social media can also takes a huge effect on how many hours of sleep people are getting daily. Sleep is an obvious necessity people need to survive and flourish, but the addicting apps of social media can cause a huge gap within peoples’ sleep schedules. Popular social media applications, such as Snapchat and Instagram are on smartphones, smartphones contains blue light which causes a person to delay melatonin production. If melatonin, the sleep inducing hormone, isn’t being produced enough, than that can causes a huge delay with the body’s sleep patterns and can lead to other health problems, such as insomnia. This trend is also affecting the younger generation according to Tuck, a sleep blog, “According to the research, sleep disorders are just as prevalent among children as they are with adults. Up to half of kids will experience a sleep problem, with 10% to 30% of children suffering from insomnia.”(Tuck). The generations that coming after us will have more sleep issues since social media is growing more and more everyday and the ages below us are interacting with these platforms. Low levels of sleep can take a huge negative toll on how someone interacts with the world 24/7. BBC news states that people who are depressed turn to social media in the nightly hours, which can lead to negative effects, “Lack of sleep can have a significant negative impact not only on young people's wellbeing, but on their relationships with family and friends and in terms of reaching their full potential at school.” (BBC). Lack of sleep can gravely affect how the younger generation below us are due to face daily difficulties due to constant usage of social media.

Social media is being heavily used and a result in that can be lack of sleep, and the results of lack of sleep can be very negative and impact how a person functions with their daily life. According to the business newsletter Conscious Company, social media is often praised for being as a tool for the modern world’s way of communication, “Social media is revolutionizing communication because it brings a new level of efficiency to influencing social change. Social media campaigns led by individuals, nonprofits, NGOs, government, or businesses can illuminate social issues, environmental concerns, and positive philanthropic deeds.” (Urlaub). Although that can be true in some circumstances, social isolation from the world is another factor resulting from constant social media usage. A survey was sent out to over 20,000 americas by Cigna, a health insurance agency, which was reported that those who spent 50 hours or more online in a week are three times more likely to feel isolated from the outside world. “And it is common for social anxiety sufferers to open social media apps to temporarily feel some connection to others. But when they unplug, the feeling of connection dissipates.” (Amatenstein). There are people in this world that feel more comfortable with interacting on these platforms than experiencing life right outside their doors, due to the constant use of social media. According to the lifestyle website A Very Well Mind, social media already doesn’t really help those who suffer from social anxiety disorder, also known as “SAD”. People who suffer from SAD or anyone who feels more comfortable with online communication, are less likely to really engage with the real world, “For those with social anxiety who feel more comfortable behind a computer screen, there may be a tendency to rely too much on social networking sites to the exclusion of trying to make real-world connections.”(Cuncic). With that being said, social media doesn’t always impact a person in a positive way as it can cause social isolation, and for those who suffer from SAD, the continuous use of these platforms do not improve real life connections with others.

There’s no denying that the world of social media has become vastly popular in today’s world. In fact it’s gotten to the point where it can be practically inevitable to avoid Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and many other popular social media platforms. Although there are a few benefits from using these applications, there is a price to pay for a few people in this world, especially those who are spending their free time drowning in the world of social media. Whether if it’s a person’s self esteem, their sleep schedules, or how they interact with the world and others around them, social media plays a part that can cause a negative effect on the factors a person contains in their daily lives, due to low self esteem, low hours of sleep, and can cause a gap between the real world and the online world.

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