**TWO EXAMPLES OF EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

**ANSWERS**

**INTRODUCTION**

DEFINITION OF THE ESSAY

Unlike what used to be obtainable during the pre-digital ages, communication has transcended the necessity of having to be physically beside another person to say something or present an item. And in the wake of the digital age, connecting and communicating with other people has further evolved into a more advanced and interactive means now popularly known as social media.

Social media is a digital and virtual platform through which people use a communication technology also known as the internet to connect with other people that are near or far. Social media gives an avenue for digitally interactive activities like video call, texting (also known as chatting), creation of various media entertainment, messaging, publishing, etc. Social media cuts across all spheres of life which include politics, advertisement, social groups, electronic entertainment, blogging, hospitality, education, healthcare, etc.

**“Social** media facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Users engage each other via a computer, tablet, or smartphone while connected on a web-based software or applications.”

**(Investopedia 2021)**

**EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While social media has brought in countless benefits concerning remote learning, remote occupation, the ease of connecting people, making business deals, enhancing relationships, etc., its emergence has equally given the room for users to develop bad habits from its usage. And as previously stated, these bad habits mostly degenerate into psychological or mental health problems like low self-esteem and obsession.

Most of the time, these psychological disorders develop with the dependence on many factors as especially found among teenagers and young people. Some of these factors like family background, peer pressure, stages of exposure to extreme media contents, the lengths of time spent using a social media platform, the types of content the said person is interacting with on such platforms, and so on will definitely impact the mental health of such user.

The assertions of **(G, et al 2021)** further add to these claims

“Social media use is one of the most popular leisure activities among adolescents. Concomitant to this is a growing concern regarding problematic social media use and its relationship with health behaviors. A study was conducted in April to June 2018 during the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey in Lithuania, a collaborative project of the World Health Organization. The sample comprised 4,191 school children (mean age 13.9 ± 1.69 years). The findings show that problematic social media use associates with about two times higher odds for worse sleep quality and lower life satisfaction.”

Thus, the adverse impacts of excessive indulgence in social media is most felt or common among the younger population. The overwhelming feeling of trying to appear in vogue among age mates, or look successful is mentally damaging.

**THESIS STATEMENT**

Social media is now ubiquitous in the activities of users across countries all over the world, and its usefulness has become quite indispensable.

Still, it is important to note that similar critical problems being generated from the use of social media are not caused by the technologies themselves. This is because many usually think that the visually appealing and easily accessible state of social media truly cause these disorders. But this is not actually so. The root of the problem rather lies in the specific activity a person uses that social media communication to do. And once that activity degenerates into a kind of ‘I can’t do without it’ feeling, then psychological problems like obsession and low self-esteem are highly likely to develop.

So this thesis will highlight how these problems usually develop and proffer feasible solutions to them.

OBSESSION

According to **Psychiatry (2020),**

“ Obsession which is technically known as Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a disorder in which people have recurring, unwanted thoughts, ideas or sensations (obsessions) that make them feel driven to do something repetitively (compulsions).”

Based on our nature, we all are drawn towards socializing with other people. That craving for companionship with others so as to work, laugh, talk, play etc., are very vital to every human being’s happiness. Psychological feelings like loneliness, fear, depression, sense of humor, joy, etc., are determined by how much we get connected or socialize with other people.

Popular social media networks like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and several others have pushed out much of the influence of real-world human communication and interaction. Unlike the stress of having to make physical contact before one can communicate or create a content, social media platforms have provided many attractive and easy means to mingle, and most especially have followers and recognition.

Unfortunately, obsession is highly likely to develop when a person gets too involved in such activities. The fear of losing social media presence and relevance becomes so high till obsession kicks in. Social media users in such position tend to constantly get depressed, lose appetite, become less productive and have irritable mood swings due to always being glued to social media. Fear of losing relevance on social media usually results to loneliness and lack of purpose.

FEASIBLE SOLUTIONS

* Making use of apps that will help keep excessive social media usage in check. These apps will help an obsessive person to stay more focused on more healthy and worthwhile activities to stay off social media. Examples of such apps include AntiSocial, Moment, AppDetox, Space, Mute, Flipd, etc.
* Participation in more in-person activities or groups like family outings, picnics, volunteer activities and community services.
* Seeing a therapist
* Avoiding Social Media apps by totally deleting them off the phone and PC.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

**“Low self-esteem** is when someone lacks confidence about who they are and what they can do. They often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate. People who struggle with low self-esteem are consistently afraid about making mistakes or letting other people down.

A major factor of low self-esteem, however, comes from your own mental state. Your inner voice, or the thoughts in your head, can be constantly telling you that you are not good enough or worth anything, even if there is evidence to the contrary. Negative thinking in general is linked to low self-worth and low self-esteem.”

**(Webmd 2020).**

Low self-esteem can be caused by physical assault, sexual abuse, verbal assault, lack of good financial and social status, being constantly surrounded by negative friends and families, failure in relationships or work, lack of support from parents or role models, and bullying.

Bullying has evolved into what is now known as cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is more or less the use of vitriol and any other forms of negative words to degrade people through the internet. Cyber bullying is now a big problem on social media platforms due to the fact that it’s easy to perpetrate while hiding behind a faceless social media account. Some even go as far as opening multiple ghost or untraceable accounts just to perpetrate this act.

Examples of cyber bullying are racial slurs, body shaming, media hazing, blackmailing or threats, media humiliation, trolling (making offensive comments or replies to other people’s posts as a form of intimidation or deliberate disruption) and so on.

Social media users who have easily affected emotions and sensitive personalities tend to develop low self-esteem when experiencing some or many of the aforementioned. And sometimes it gets worse when the problem of obsession gets mixed with this. In fact, many sensitive social media users keep coming back to platforms they already know are toxic to their mental health due to the irresistible benefits they think they are getting from them. Examples are social media influencers committing suicide due to trolling from some of their followers.

FEASIBLE SOLUTIONS

* Identify personal strengths and talents and start working on them through projects.
* Having a healthy confidence in oneself.
* Avoiding fake lifestyles and pretense.
* Seeing a psychological therapist.

**CONCLUSION**

Social media usage has undoubtedly become indispensable in today’s daily activities, especially in the critical aspects of connecting with clients, families, colleagues and acquaintances. But just like everything else, its excessive use can lead to critical health problems.

One of the means of controlling obsession with social media among teens is parental advice and awareness on the dangers of excessive social media. Parents can still monitor their children without being intrusive. The way to do that is to always make sure to get them more involved in family or outdoor activities that will encourage bonding, physical communication skills and sense of belonging.

Also, words of encouragement and strong will should always be impacted into activities of youngsters so as to always make them see their abilities and personalities as unique and not validated by peer opinion or virtual approval.

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