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Has Social Media Made People More or Less Connected?

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ABSTRACT

Social media has been explained in many definition, but it is usually know for it characteristics that is, to connect human beings with other people all around the world. It is main means of mass communication. Nowadays mobile device is used by a large number of population and the use of social media is also very large. The use has increased so much that a question has arise , has social media improve the relationship or harm them? So a study has been conducted to collect information about the topic by examining the idea of researcher and scholar. And to know about their review on social connections and interpersonal relationship. Also get to know about the advantages and disadvantage of social media on social connections. A survey was also conducted in 2010, by the American professor to get data regarding the survey to know the results is positive or negative different age groups people we been examined in this survey. The response was give by people about the social connections and disconnection. After this case study another scholar gave his opinion on social media connect or disconnect people. According to his sampling method survey a 237 young adults between the age group 18-35 years were taken into consideration. The purpose was same as the earlier case study has, but the result was little different . Short breaks improved feelings temporarily. But long-term happiness did not change much. This means social media is not completely bad. It depends on how and how much it is used.

KEYWORDS

Social Connections, Interpersonal Relationship, Social

*Media, Connection, Disconnection.***INTRODUCTION**

In the current world, people use social media as an important part of daily life. From the beginning of the day to its end. People frequently use social media platforms in their daily lives for communication, information sharing, entertainment, and maintaining relationships. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn help people access content according to their preferences.

Through the use of these platforms, people have developed connections with one another by sharing videos, pictures, thoughts, and ideas. Social media not only allows individuals but also companies, governments, and organizations to interact with a large number of people.

After understanding social media in general terms, the actual meaning of “social media” refers to a wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-generated content, and join online communities. Social media not only provides information and communication but also forms different types of connections such as emotional, social, community-based, professional, and informational. These connections change according to situations and needs. People use social media platforms to stay connected with one another but today our patterns of connection and interaction have changed with the advancement of technology. The rapid development in technical aspects has increased people’s dependence on social media in their daily lives.

Social media is one of the biggest factors in life nowadays which are known as the connectors among different types of people. The number of social media users is increasing rapidly in the world which has led to connectivity among people. It is identified in the figure that the number of social media users has been increasing every year. There were about 3.9 billion social media users in 2020 which has increased to 4.59 billion in 2022 . Apart from that, it is expected that the number of social media users in the world will be 5.85 billion in 2027. Along with the number of social media users, several health issues are also increasing among people .

Social media is a social instrument of communication. Social network is the structure made by people for common goal . This research briefly explains about how people connect with each other and share their visual relationship with society . Other people suggest that face to face interaction is good ,but after the arrival of advance networking people started using this social

media to share their feelings, emotion, thought and ideas. Because most of the people in current world have smart phone in their hands to get connected with this network but the ongoing debate raises an important question: are people while using this social media are connected more or less? The research paper critically examines both the debate points and provides balanced answers for the issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review finds a mix of research about social media on social connection. As the use of social media continues to increase rapidly, a growing number of people actively engage with online networking platforms. Numerous researchers have examined that social media strengthens social connections among people. Social media is often presented as a tool that promotes communication and connection among individuals. Surprisingly, from a survey by LX Chen (2016) it is conducted, that most people who use Facebook (social networking site) claim that their relationships with some of their friends are improved, even though they do not have any in-depth or personal conversation with them and they can understand their friends better even without any communication. It contradicts with what we have known. It seems that relationship can be improved with Facebook alone. In some cases it is seen that a person who suffers from social anxiety may find it an easy way to connect with people in a digital way rather than face-to-face interaction. This increases a sense of belonging and a feeling of participation.

However, some scholars suggest that there are negative consequences of social media on social interaction. Although, 'the paradox of connectivity' suggests that individuals may have a large number of followers or online contacts, this does not necessarily translate into meaningful social relationships. Excessive use of social media has been associated with reduced face-to-face interaction, which may weaken emotional bonds. Research indicates that frequent engagement with social media can contribute to feelings of loneliness and social isolation, despite increased online connectivity.

Furthermore, social media use has been linked to mental and emotional health concerns. According to former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy (2025), a lack of social connection can be as harmful to health as smoking up to fifteen cigarettes a day. Loneliness is not only an emotional experience but also has physical health consequences, including an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, and other chronic conditions. Similarly, Roberts (2024) found that spending four to six hours daily on social media may create unrealistic expectations and

distorted perceptions of reality, leading to dissatisfaction and emotional distress.

Several researchers (Ahn & Shin, 2013; Allen, Ryan, Gray, McInerney, & Waters, 2014; Grieve et al., 2013; Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011) have highlighted that social media has significantly changed the dynamics of social interaction. These studies suggest that while social media can help establish and maintain connections, it can also hinder genuine social connectedness when overused

The debate points has been discussed by many scholars over the past decade and a examination have been made about the advantages and disadvantage of social media on interpersonal relationship and social connections. So, the literature presents a complex review on both the debate issues.

Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationship and Social Connection.

Several researchers argue that social media has positive effects when used moderately. It helps individual to connect with friends and family, long – distance relationship particularly and maintaining social emotional bonds with them. Social media helps user to find communities that have same interest as the user carries which will create a sense of belonging and reduces isolation.

Scholars also identified that social media provides opportunities for emotional support, self – expression , creativity and make us aware about social and mental health issues of social media. Furthermore, career related option are also available on networking sites for professional which help them to enhance self confidence, personal growth and social connection among people.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

In opposite to positive researchers have also mentioned the negative effects of social media on social connections. Scholars have said that the major reason of disconnection is social comparison, which often lead to feeling of inadequacy, low self esteem and loneliness. The users frequently compare their life with others by seeing their achievements, appearance which are shared by them with comments. The major is the reason, the major is the effect of it . This lead to dissatisfaction, loneliness, depression, distress of career among youth , which often lead to withdrawal of family and friends interaction and social engagement with people. This increases the feeling of

disconnection.

Another impact is social isolation. It reduces face to face interaction between people, because online communication is excessively use by the people. The damage here is cause of personal communication, weakens emotional bonds and effect relationship quality. Another one is , Fear of Missing out (FOMO) is a psychological consequences linked to social media use. If a person is continuously using social media for hours and hours seeing the achievement and social activities of others it can create a social media dependency and it creates distraction among users and feelings of living alone in every situation

Additionally, researchers argue that digital communication lack non verbal cues such as expression of face, the tone of voice which are lost important for understanding. Therefore, it weakens the bond of emotions and lead to disconnection of relationship

In conclusion, the literature indicates that social media plays a dual role in human interaction it is not purely positive or negative. While it offers opportunities for communication and connectivity, excessive and unbalanced use may contribute to social and psychological challenges.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES /QUESTION

The research objectives is to identify whether social media strength or weakens the interpersonal relationship. The aim is to analyse whether social media help people to build strong emotional bonds or else it reduces the depth of relationship with others . Does it allows friends to get connected even if they stay far away? The objective has two pointers which on one side allows individual to stay in touch with friend and relatives who are far away from them and maintain communication through message, video call, comments. This side of social media may strength our relationship by frequency of communication. On the other hand, It also investigate the opposite pointers of objective. Does online communication has replace meaningful face-to-face interaction? Are the online interaction in social media is short and small through emojis, comments? The objective examine that the relationship is not through number of connector but with the quality of emotional bonds and depth of relationship. It tell us to identify whether is gain understanding ,trust, empathy and closeness or it reduces them.

However, another's objective is that how social media focuses on face to face relationship and between screen time .The answer is complex and depends on multiple factors, including the amount of time spent online, the specific platforms used, and the

motivations behind their use. Individuals who primarily spend more time on screen scrolling for followers and “likes” may experience feelings of inadequacy or loneliness rather than face to face connection. Research also suggests that social media usage is highly increased risks of mental health such as anxiety and depression. These conditions often contribute to feelings of isolation, thereby weakening real-life social bonds. Personal observations further highlight this issue. For example, during family gatherings, teenagers are often absorbed in scrolling through their phones, while adults frequently check emails instead of engaging in meaningful conversations. Such behavior can reduce opportunities of interaction, especially when family members meet only occasionally. Moreover, communication through digital platforms may limit the expression of emotional bonds, increasing the likelihood of misunderstandings and weakening relationships.

Finally to suggest strategies for minimising the use of social media among people. To reduce the potential disconnection caused by social media, individuals can take practical steps to prioritize face-to-face interactions. Scheduling time to meet friends and family, sharing meals, studying together, or simply engaging in meaningful discussions can strengthen interpersonal relationships. Limiting screen time and practicing mindful communication can also help individuals become more present in their daily interactions. By consciously choosing to focus on the people physically around us rather than our devices, stronger and more meaningful relationships can be developed. Since social media was originally intended to bring people closer, it is essential for individuals to reflect on whether it is enhanced or harming their well-being. Setting boundaries, taking periodic breaks, or reducing usage altogether may be beneficial if social media negatively affects mental health. Ultimately, maintaining a healthy balance is essential for emotional well-being and social connection.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to find out whether social media make people more or less connected. So , a analysis was made In 2010 , a study by Pew Internet Project was made which showed that about 75% of American teenagers were using social media and wireless devices like mobile phone and other gaming device to get connected with internet. This information gives us an idea that most of the teens were constantly connected online. But some of the scholars think this use of online connection is good for the students because it help them to build communities and stayed in connection with this communities. However on the other side some scholars protested the argument they said of the

social media is used constantly then it will lead to isolation of real life relationship and damages the society.

So on this an experiment was conducted in spring 2010 , by the professor the students were told to get disconnected with all social media devices and technology for 36 hours. All students agreed and were ready for the task assigned to them because they carried marks and was a part of their course.

After completion on the task the students were required to make a blog or paper of 800 words about what experience they had without phone or any internet technology. Student response was both positive and negative. Some student had fun being disconnected with the devices while so got uncomfortable without their phone. While some understood the feeling of face to face interaction and some got bored because they don't know how to get connected with people and share there experience.

The research was conducted with people of all age groups to know whether they liked being disconnected with social media devices and to gain a new experience for life.

Another study of researcher Alicia Gilbert, Julius Klingelhofer, and Adrian Meier, who were from Friedrich Schiller University Jena , Germany . The research was published in 2025, and which focused on 237 young adults between the age group of 18-35 years. The purpose of the study was to know a temporary disconnecting from digital media will affects well being and social connection. Using sampling method over two week , participants reported 12,407 feelings of real life situation. The study examined that of a person is disconnect more than usual, they feel more happy, more energetic and socially connected in that moment. But is a person is not using more social media then usual it doesn't make any change his life . Disconnecting social media will not necessarily connect with people.

As both the case study given by the researchers has dual argument. And give different information perspective of connection or disconnect.

CONCLUSION

Human beings what to connect with people but due to some busy schedule they use social media to get connected with the people. Through calls, text, email and even more the online mood help people to connect with their family and friends when they live far away. When human beings uses social media in appropriate away it becomes easier form them to build healthy and peaceful relationships and people feel more connected.

However the excessive use of social media also causes problem. Spending hours on networking sites lead to mental effects on our body and mind ,if a person spend whole day and night on social media and not being connected to family and friends then it develops feelings of loneliness and isolation from family and friends group. The person starts feeling depressed, alone and full of stress. There are two things possible in this situation first the relationship breaks down and face to face interaction ends with the family and friends.

In conclusion, social media has both roles the positive and negative but and its has more or less connected to people. But the use of social media is on us, of social media is useful wisely and down not replace our relationship and real life interaction it can be helpful. But if it is overuse then it will harm our social interaction and relationships. Nowadays, young adults think the only way to reduce stress is to used phone scroll reels and then relax but this is not the right path to deal with stress instead of using visual devices its better to talk to friends and family play outdoor games, take a walk, try some new hobby, read books this all things should be included in our life as this things makes our life more valuable.

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