

Subject: **ESOn4019 Research Methodology**

Topic of research proposal: **Impact of Social Media on Youth**

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Abstract

What your question is

My topic of research proposal is "Impact of Social Media on Youth". I want to explore both negative and positive impact of social media on the young generation.

Why it is important to be studied

If we would compare our lifestyle now to our lifestyle twenty years ago, we would see huge differences in this comparison. Our life has faced plenty of changes during the last decades: now, we have a new lifestyle with different habits, norms, and settings in our minds. Novator technologies, for sure, play no part in this dramatic change: development of the Internet, online lifestyle, AR & VR and many other factors played their part in this change.

There are plenty of social media channels and most of them are based on the interest of the users: Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTik are for sharing mostly visual content such as videos and photos, Twitter and Facebook are for writing articles, blogs, thoughts, and, for example, LinkedIn is mainly used to build a business network and search jobs. As you can see there is a big variety of using social media, but in fact, any of these platforms can fully impact us - it can make us addicted, feel different emotions, learn new things and many other activities.

Methodological framework and data source

In the case of this research proposal, I used an online survey as a research method. It is a research method used for collecting data from a predefined group of respondents to gain information and insights into various topics of interest.

Limitation

Very few amounts of big research had been applied on the topic of social media and its psychological impact on the young generation. Most of those which exist are mainly too broad and do not cover the specific topic. Hereby this research proposal would be extremely handy to develop a full size research on the impact of social media on youth.

Audience

When it comes to the audience of social media users, most of it goes for young adults, but teenagers and young adults also spend a big chunk of their time on social media. "Social media plays a big role in teen culture today. Surveys show that ninety percent of teens ages 13-17 have used social media. Seventy-five percent report having at least one active social media profile, and 51% report visiting a social media site at least daily. Two thirds of teens have their own mobile devices with internet capabilities. On average, teens are online almost nine hours a day, not including time for homework." (1) says the research of American Academy of Child and

Adolescent Psychiatry. Social media is a big part of many young people's social and creative lives. Youngsters and teenagers use social media to have fun, make and maintain friendships, share interests, explore identities and develop relationships with family. It's an extension of their offline and face-to-face interactions. And now, during the pandemic, the percentage of social media users among the teenagers even escalated.

But there can be a question: "Why youngsters?". That would be a reasonable question, considering that almost every age group uses social media. But the thing is that these young people are most influenced by social media thanks to their young age and feature of absorbing new information and being curious. Furthermore, personality, habits and lifestyle forming of a person occurs mostly during his or her teenager period.

Online survey

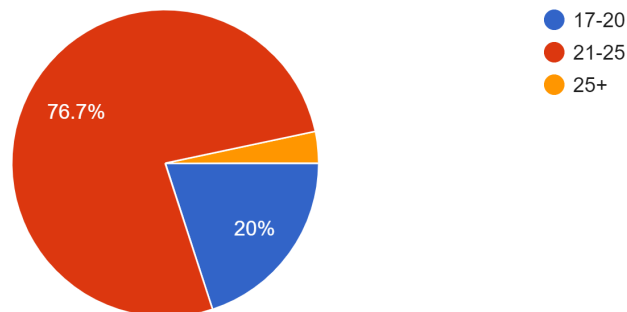
I used an online survey in my research proposal since I am sure that method of research is one of the fastest methods of collecting data based on interest. Online surveys are quick to configure and send and due to the ease, they tend to save researchers' time. In my case, I decided to make the survey anonymous since it forces respondents to be more truthful by knowing that no one will know that it was him or her who answered in a certain way.

I kept my survey as short as possible and it takes less than 5 minutes to answer all questions. I opted social media itself as a channel of distribution since it creates more engagement and can go viral. Firstly, I made up questions based on papers that I read about survey questions and on my experience of being a social media manager. Secondly, I conducted the survey via Google Form, and sent myself first, in order to check up if everything works, then distributed it through Instagram and WhatsApp chats. For now, youngsters from Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Hungary, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Ukraine and Russia participated in my survey considering the fact that people from different countries and with numerous backgrounds behave differently.

Firstly, I was planning to make this survey only amongst teenagers, but eventually I came up with an idea of segmenting ages into generation, as a result I have more responses from so-called Generation Z (people who were born between 1997 and 2015) since they have more familiarity with the new technologies. Furthermore, teenagers and young adults have most different goals on using social media here it has to be the object of the research as well.

Please indicate your age

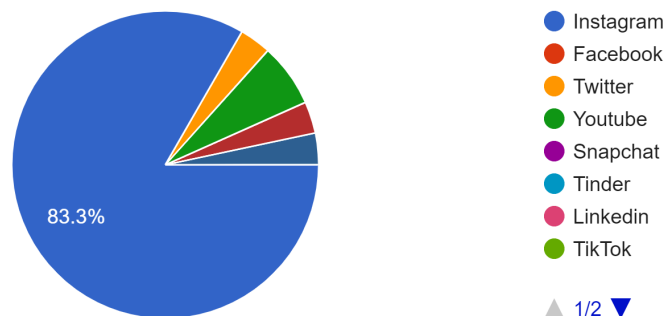
30 responses



When it comes to the most frequently used social media platform, with almost 82% Instagram is in first place. Then comes Youtube (7.1%), Twitter (3.6%) and Telegram (3.6%). According to Matthew Pittmana and Brandon Reichb, “Image-based social media may attenuate loneliness due to increased social presence” (2) and here we can see that most of the respondents use Instagram which is the most popular image-based social media channel.

Which of the following social media channels do you use the most?

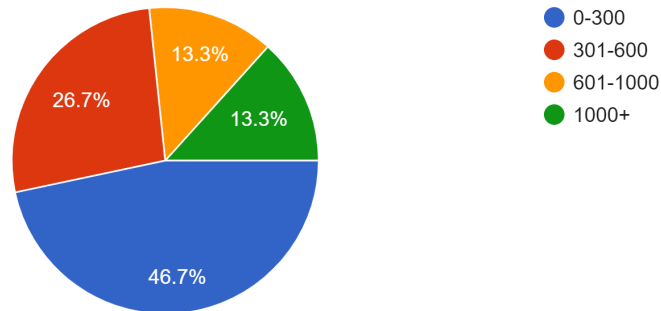
30 responses



As for the amount of followers or friends, the same research of Matthew Pittmana and Brandon Reichb says that often the more a person has followers, more he feels alone in real life.

Please indicate how many followers/friends do you have on your most popular social media platform?

30 responses



Also, according to my survey, when the amount of followers increase, the person experiences social media addiction and sleep schedule issues.

Please indicate how many followers/friends do you have on your most popular social media platform?

- ☐ 0-300
- ☐ 301-600
- ☐ 601-1000
- ☒ 1000+

In your opinion, what kind of negative impact do you get from social media? (Proposing your version is encouraged) (You can choose more than one) *

- ☐ Fear of missing out (FOMO)
- ☒ Social media addiction
- ☒ Unhealthy sleep patterns
- ☐ Negative body image (comparing your body image to others)
- ☐ I do not get negative impact from social media
- ☐ Other:

These two screenshots demonstrate correlation between the amount of followers and negative impact that a person experiences.

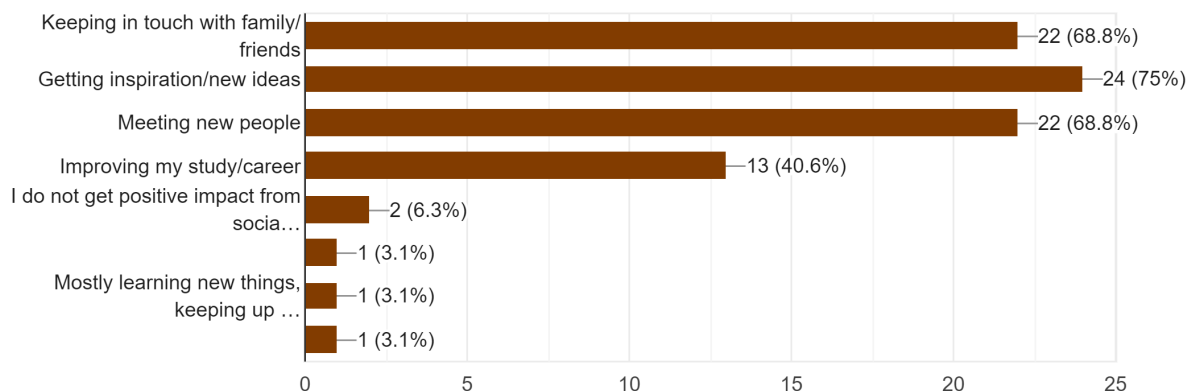
Positive Effects of Social Media

In “Are social networking sites good for our society?” by Social Networking ProCon.org it is stating that social networking sites allow people to communicate and remain in contact with friends as well as meet new people. These sites allow people to find others with similar interests that they can create a relationship with and get to know one another. Groups can be joined or formed to meet people with similar interests, and views. Social networking allows for creative expression by using tools such as blogging and messaging to post ideas and stories.

Statistics in this survey confirms that almost 75% of respondents use social media in order for “getting inspiration/new ideas”. Educational/career development and keeping in touch with family/friends are coming next with 68.8% for each. Notice that some respondents added their own version of positive activities they experience on social media. “I get relaxed watching some funny videos or movies after work”, “Having a platform to share what I create”, “Mostly learning new things, keeping up with new trends in my profession” are specific answers of the respondents.

In your opinion, what kind of positive impact do you get from social media? (Proposing your version is encouraged) (You can choose more than one)

32 responses



Negative Effects of Social Media

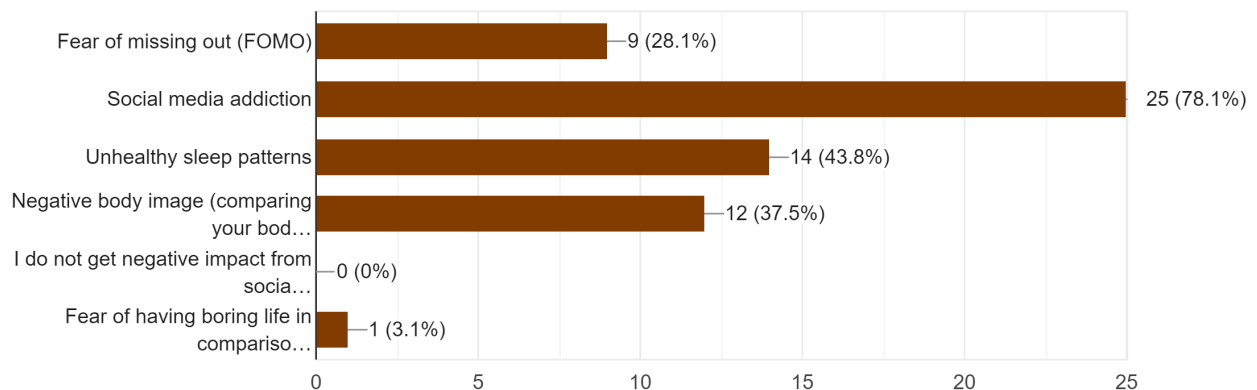
Social media reduces the amount of face to face socializing and replaces it with online interaction which is believed to result in low quality relationships with other people (Mikami, Szewedo, Allen, Evans, & Hare, 2010). It also has been said that social media endangers children by allowing pedophiles to seek out children (Are social networking sites good for our society?).

Also since they are becoming mobile it might encourage people to use cell phones to access these sites while driving just like text messaging was a popular thing to do while driving.

Furthermore, there is so-called FOMO which means fear of missing out, is considered as one of the main disadvantages of using social media for too long a time. When an active user checks Instagram Stories of his friends or global news day after day, and then he suddenly stops, FOMO occurs. This symptom is well spread amongst the young generation and amongst respondents of my survey as well since it takes almost 30% from the table shown below. Nevertheless the most spread negative side of social media usage is general addiction from it which comes first in the table with 78.1%.

In your opinion, what kind of negative impact do you get from social media? (Proposing your version is encouraged) (You can choose more than one)

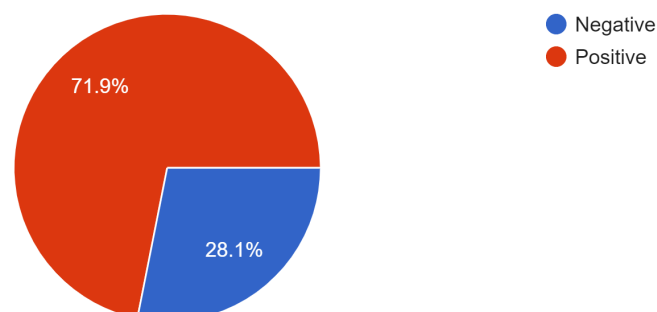
32 responses



But overall speaking, according to my survey, people see social media more positively (71.9%) rather than negatively (28.1%)

Do you feel that social media has more positive or negative effects?

32 responses



When talking more individually, respondents say that social media has an overall positive impact on their life (50%), or both positive and negative (46.9%), and only 3.1% reports that social media has a fully negative impact on their life.

Conclusion

Everything has its own advantages and disadvantages, so has social media. Channels of social media are continuously advancing, and changing to fix the negative problems. One example would be accessing social media channels using cell phones so that people can access the site on the go rather than sit at home on a computer. Most users have said that they have had only positive experiences with social media, while very few people experience negative sides such as addiction, negative body image. There are still problems that need to be fixed, but it seems that the positive effects outweigh the negative effects. Social media is a very valuable tool that can be used to meet new people, and allow people to remain in contact with friends. Even though it can waste time, social media positively affects the world by allowing people to communicate, and remain in contact with friends in an easy and convenient way.

Eventually following the results drawn from this survey, most spread negative side of social media is social media addiction, while the most popular positive effect of social media is getting inspiration/new ideas.

References

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