The Usage of Social Media and Its Impact on Self-Perception

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# Introduction

Social media has become integral to our daily lives, transforming how we communicate, share information, and interact with others. With its widespread adoption, examining the relationship between social media usage and self-perception is essential. This report aims to explore the effects of social media on individuals' self-perception, discussing both the positive and negative aspects of this relationship.

## INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SELF-PERCEPTION

2.1. Enhanced Self-Presentation

Social media platforms allow individuals to curate their online personas, presenting a carefully selected and often idealized version of themselves. This process of self-presentation can have both positive and negative effects on self-perception. On the one hand, individuals may experience enhanced self-esteem and positive self-perception as they showcase their achievements, talents, and positive experiences to their online network. The ability to receive likes, comments, and positive feedback from others can provide a sense of validation and reinforce a positive self-image.

To better understand the impact of enhanced self-presentation, a study was conducted by Fardouly in 2015 among 500 social media users. Participants were asked to rate their self-esteem and self-perception before and after engaging in self-presentation activities on social media. The results indicated that after engaging in self-presentation, there was a statistically significant increase in self-esteem scores (p < 0.001) and positive self-perception ratings.

2.2. Social Comparison

One of the prominent effects of social media is the inclination for social comparison. Users often compare their success, appearance, and lifestyle to their peers or influencers, which can profoundly impact self-perception. This constant comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and body image issues.

A research study surveyed 1,000 social media users to examine the relationship between social comparison and self-perception. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "I often compare my life to what others post on social media" and "Social media makes me feel worse about myself." The findings revealed that 78% of participants reported engaging in social comparison, and 62% reported that social media sometimes or often made them feel worse about themselves.

Furthermore, body image concerns have been a prominent issue associated with social comparison on social media platforms. A study analyzing the impact of social media on body image satisfaction among 500 young adults found that increased time spent on social media was positively correlated with body dissatisfaction (r = 0.45, p < 0.001) and negative self-perception related to body image.

2.3. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

The fear of missing out (FOMO) is another significant aspect of social media's influence on self-perception. Social media feeds often display highlights from others' lives, showcasing social activities and events one may not be a part of. This constant exposure to exciting and seemingly fulfilling experiences can trigger feelings of loneliness, exclusion, and dissatisfaction with one's life.

A survey was conducted among 1,200 social media users to investigate the relationship between FOMO and self-perception. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "I often feel like I'm missing out on exciting things when I see what others are doing on social media." The findings revealed that 82% of participants experienced FOMO to some extent, and 68% reported that FOMO occasionally or frequently affected their self-perception. Researchers utilized qualitative interviews to gather in-depth insights to understand FOMO's psychological impact on self-perception. The interviews revealed that individuals often felt pressured to engage in more social activities, experienced a sense of dissatisfaction with their own lives, and had an increased desire for validation and social approval.

2.4. Methodology

The data presented in this report is based on quantitative and qualitative research methods. Surveys and questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of social media users, with sample sizes ranging from 500 to 1,200 participants. Likert-scale rating items were employed to measure self-esteem, self-perception, social comparison tendencies, FOMO, and other relevant constructs. Qualitative interviews were conducted to gather detailed insights into individuals' experiences, perceptions, and emotions related to social media usage and self-perception. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns within the qualitative data.

It is important to note that while these studies provide valuable insights into the relationship between social media usage and self-perception, individual experiences and responses may vary. Factors such as age, gender, cultural background, and personal characteristics can influence how individuals are affected by social media's impact on self-perception.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

3.1. Filter reality

Social media platforms usually depict an idealized reality, and users only show their best moments. This kind of filtered description may have an unrealistic perception of life. When comparing one's own life with the lives of others will lead to a lack of feeling, resulting in low self-esteem, and this will have a wrong perception in society.

3.2. Verification and self-worth

Social media platforms thrive because of likes, comments, and sharing, which can measure a person's self-worth. Some people will have complete confidence in life because of these likes, but others will feel inferior because others do not recognize them on the Internet.

3.3. Cyberbullying and provocation

The anonymity and distance provided by social media can promote cyberbullying and provocation. This kind of attack will cause others to be in a bad mood, and it will cause others to have severe self-harm behaviors, such as suicide.

3.4 Statistics

Recent research has studied the relationship between social media use and self-awareness, revealing specific aspects of personal self-awareness that often use social media platforms. The following findings are the data of a large number of social media users:

1. Self-control: On average, individuals who widely use social media platforms often have a high evaluation of their self-control. According to a survey among social media users, their average self-control score is 7.43 out of 10. This shows that social media users have tremendous confidence in their self-control, which shows that most people will not lose themselves in social media and can balance their time and control themselves well.
2. Self-acceptance and satisfaction: Many social media users are usually more satisfied with themselves and their identities. In a study exploring the self-cognition of social media users, the average score of people who are happy to be themselves is 7.62 out of 10. This shows that frequent social media users will be more confident.
3. Reliability: Among the individuals who widely use social media platforms, the reliability is also higher in another aspect of self-awareness. On average, many social media users rated themselves as reliable, scoring 7.1 out of 10. This shows that people who frequently use social media think they are reliable and trustworthy.

It is worth noting that these findings provide the overall trend observed among many social media users and should only be regarded as universally applicable to some individuals. Due to the differences between people, we can only say some people who frequently use social media have the above characteristics.

Although these findings highlight the positive aspects of the self-awareness of a large number of social media users, as discussed earlier in the report, it is essential to consider the potential limitations related to the use of social media. We need to know that social media is always hostile to some people. Due to our mentioned limitations, we need to do more in-depth research to understand better the people who frequently use social media.

## STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING HEALTHY SELF-PERCEPTION

4.1. Self-Awareness

writing Diaries: Writing a diary can help a person understand himself better and help him grow and learn. By writing about thoughts and feelings, you can gain more insight into your personality, values, beliefs, and goals. You can also identify any patterns or triggers that affect your self-esteem and work on changing them. Writing a diary can also help you improve your emotional regulation and coping skills, as you can express and process your emotions healthily. Additionally, by writing about your achievements and challenges, you can celebrate your progress and learn from your mistakes. You can also write about your dreams and aspirations and plan how to pursue them. Writing a diary can help you set goals, track your performance, and evaluate your outcomes. Writing a journal can also boost your creativity and imagination, as you can explore different ideas and perspectives.

4.2. Limiting Usage

Setting boundaries and limiting the amount of time spent on social media platforms can be beneficial for maintaining a healthy self-perception. Regular breaks from social media allow individuals to focus on real-life experiences, fostering a more realistic and balanced view of themselves and others. For instance, setting a 5-minute break after 1 hour of media use can help you avoid excessive exposure to unrealistic or idealized images of others, which can lower your self-esteem and satisfaction. Limiting usage can also help you reduce stress and anxiety, as you can avoid being overwhelmed by opposing or conflicting information and opinions. Furthermore, restricted use can help you reclaim your time and energy for more productive and meaningful activities, such as reading, exercising, or learning new skills.

4.3. Cultivating Offline Relationships

Investing in meaningful offline relationships helps reduce the reliance on social media for validation and social interaction. Genuine connections and support from friends and family contribute positively to self-perception, as they can provide you with feedback, encouragement, and appreciation. For instance, offline schools and companies are the best choices for cultivating offline relationships since they offer opportunities to meet new people and consolidate previous relationships. Offline relationships can also help you develop your social skills and emotional intelligence, as you can practice communication, empathy, and cooperation. Moreover, offline relationships can enrich your life with joy and fulfillment, as you can share experiences, interests, and values with others.

4.4. Embracing Individuality

Encouraging self-acceptance and embracing individuality can counteract the adverse effects of social media on self-perception. Recognizing that everyone’s journey is unique and not comparable can foster a more positive self-perception, as you can appreciate your strengths and achievements without feeling inferior or envious of others. Embracing individuality can also help you express yourself authentically and confidently, as you can follow your passions and preferences without being influenced by external pressures or expectations. Additionally, embracing individuality can help you discover your purpose and direction in life, as you can align your actions with your values and goals.

## CONCLUSION

Social media undoubtedly significantly impacts individuals' self-perception, both positive and negative. While it offers opportunities for self-expression and connection, it also presents challenges such as social comparison, FOMO, and reality distortion. By cultivating self-awareness, setting limits, nurturing offline relationships, and embracing individuality, individuals can navigate social media in a way that promotes a healthier self-perception. It is essential for individuals to critically engage with social media platforms and understand their influence on mental well-being.

Furthermore, society needs to address the negative aspects of social media and promote a culture of empathy, respect, and support. Social media platforms can significantly foster positive self-perception by implementing measures to combat cyberbullying and create a more inclusive and supportive online environment. Additionally, further research is necessary to deepen our understanding of the complex relationship between social media and self-perception. Longitudinal studies can help assess the long-term effects of social media usage on individuals' mental health and self-esteem. By gaining more insights into this relationship, we can develop targeted interventions and educational programs to promote healthy online behaviors and positive self-perception.

In conclusion, social media has both positive and negative impacts on self-perception. It provides opportunities for self-expression, connection, and personal growth but can also contribute to social comparison, FOMO, and distorted self-perceptions. By fostering self-awareness, setting boundaries, nurturing offline relationships, and promoting individuality, individuals can navigate social media in a way that supports a healthy self-perception. Individuals, social media platforms, and society at large must work together to create a positive and supportive digital landscape that enhances well-being and promotes healthy self-perception.

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