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S.L.I.I.T

Assignment 01

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The Impact of social media on the social lives of young adults

English for Academic Purposes – IT1080

B.Sc. (Hons) Information Technology

Title Page

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Terms of Reference

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1. Methodology

This project has been conducted as a form of research, Collecting Information about the topic from various sources on the Internet including books, scholarly articles, documents from the internet, videos, and documentaries

2. Introduction

Social media is typically a form of communication, which enables users to create and share content worldwide. In the modern era, social media has become the vital supremacy of a person's way of life. It plays an important role in our daily lives. Years passing by companies continue to develop new technologies and innovations, causing an increasing level of popularity and usage among young adults.

Social media by its word "social" has been a big help for the world's social problems. Many young adults have their own opinion on social media, that it is rather beneficial than detrimental, and that many news publications focus on negativity, because that's what they get attention from. There are numerous positive social impacts due to social media, such that of helping issues of the society, by posting them and creating an exclusive worldwide awareness for those in need of resources. Trending hashtags over social media platforms such as twitter, many people engage and express their thoughts or even help in different ways. Social media tends to formulate a weak interaction in the real life, since the social media platforms make the users to gravitate only towards other users with similarity. And furthermore, social media is not an essential platform to build long lasting relationships. Many find it difficult to overcome such impacts on their social lives due to social media. These limitations can be controlled to a certain extent through recommended actions and techniques.

This report illustrates on the foundation of social media and how it came to life, emphasizing significant positive and negative impacts on the social lives of young adults. Solutions to overcome such risk factors. Additionally, the demographic utilization of social media amongst the young generation.

Significance of the Topic –

Objectives –

- Identifying what are the forms of social media?

- To examine the usage of social media around the world and why it has such a vast influence on the youth

- To identify the positive effects of social media on the social lives of young adults

- To identify the negative impacts created by social networking sites on young adults

- To identify how Social Networking sites affect the lifestyle of young adults.

- To identify suggestions that would make the youth to focus more on the positive effects of social media

3. Body

3.1 How evolution of social media affects the social lives of young adults

The life is impossible without communication. To be social, human need interactions between people. That is the basic need that social media came into play. In less than a generation, the information exchanged between people became electronic and digitalized. How did this begin? How did social media affect the lives of billions of young people? It is all about the evolution of social media [1].

The Internet was born on 1983. It was a turning point of social media and was invented as a way for government research to share information. Prior to this communicating with each other through a computer network did not have a standard way. After the invention of the communication protocol, Transfer Control Protocol/Internetwork Protocol (TCP/IP), this allowed diverse kinds of computers to communicate with various kinds of networks [2].

Modern Social Media Outlets

With this explosion all over the world, the introduction of online communication with several online platforms came into action. The most prominent online platforms which are used by young adults nowadays are Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Tik-Tok. With this evolution it made it easier for people to communicate digitally with friends, colleagues, family members and likeminded individuals that have never met in person. This made grow free online communities easily without even leaving the house. Researchers found that 72% of the people who interact with these types of social media are of age 18-29. [3]

Moreover, the average number of users on social media are increasing with each passing day. Research shows that with more than 15 million active users use it. They spent most of their time playing games, watching videos, and making online connections. Most of the young people sleep or even wake up with their phones checking for the updates. Social lives of young people changed in a positive impact as well as in a negative impact through this evolution. This is a brief history on the rapid change of the lives of the young adults with the evolution of social media.

What's Next for social media?

Turning point will surely be Artificial Intelligence (AI) embedding with social media. With improvement brands will be able to reach out to customers, interact with them and understand their needs easily by tracking them.

Social creatures and interaction between them will surely continue the evolution of social media to next decade and beyond [4].

3.2 Usage of social media around the world and why it has such a vast influence on the youth

When it comes to the likes of social media and its most vast audience, a few factors are responsible for how , where and when it is used.
A report was conducted earlier this year to deduce how people's preferences and behaviours vary widely geographically[5]. Furthermore, while many of these social networking sites are in demand among users all over the globe, the ways in which people utilize these platforms often differ meaningfully between geographies.

The world's total population accounts to 7.8 billion people, 16 percent of which is dominated by the youth aged 15-24 years [6] and 84% of them contribute to the use of social media on the daily. Social media has become a distinctive part of the lifestyles of most of these individuals, for which 50 percent of them head straight to Facebook after waking up [7]. This constant crave for social media has gone rampant and the young adult generation are the ones who are prominently affected, many often leading to addiction.

With 80% of the youth owning a mobile phone and having direct access to the internet and its social networking sites, a study was conducted to show how frequently social media was used.
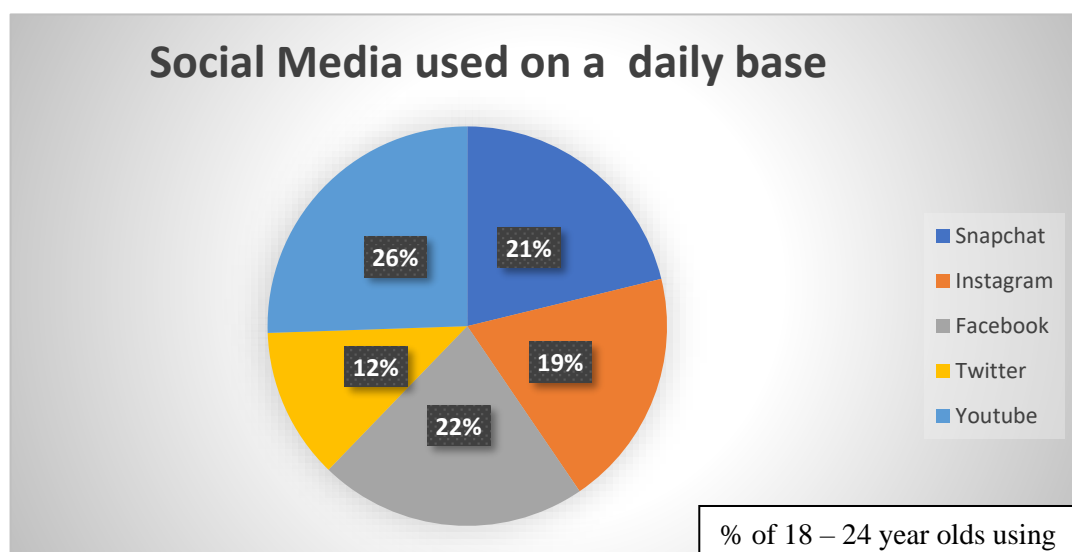
Social Media in different works of life

A study of 300 students was conducted in Ghana to understand the usage of social media in 2 different works of life, 150 students from the Rural Districts and the other 150 from the Urban Districts. [9]

Table 0.1

Area	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	WhatsApp	Others	Total
Rural Districts	50	21	18	55	6	**150**
Urban District	59	17	28	39	7	**150**
Total	**109**	**38**	**46**	**94**	**13**	**300**

The Table above represents 4 major social networking sites and how their use is distinguished among the districts, The popular texting app, WhatsApp is used more in the Rural District mainly because of all the facilities such as calling, video chatting, texting is built into one, and the second most poised answer was the that it is relatively easy to use. The other significant apps that were being used by students of the Urban Districts were YouTube and Facebook mainly due to and quick relief factor of having too much time on their hands unlike students in rural districts that are often faced with power cuts etc. [8].

3.3 Positive Impacts of social media on Young Adults

Strengthen Relationships

The anytime, anywhere feature has made messenger applications a popular medium of communication. Social media enables people to communicate instantly which specially helps to strengthen long distance relationships. "Common Sense Media" reported, 70% of the teenagers use social media several times a day [11]. The study also revealed that social media helps the youth to overcome from loneliness, understand different perspectives and value human relationships.

The unique feature of recommending users with similar interests helps many young adults to make friends and to develop their mutual interests by educating one another.

Lifelong love partners have found to be users of social media. A study done by Switzerland's University of Geneva (UNIGE) found that couples who met through online dating applications stay more committed to their relationships [12]. Social media not only connects loved ones, it also connects people all over the world.

Intercultural Adaptation

Social media demonstrates that every human being relates to commonalities. Since many young adults migrate to work or study, having knowledge about culture and habitats allows adjusting quickly to the new environment. Social media allows anyone to follow different cultures, learn languages and enjoy entertainment content across the world bringing much diversity to our lives. YouTube, Facebook, and several applications allow anyone to connect with the global community by watching and sharing various kinds of videos [13]. Social media not only assist users specially the young generation to be unprejudiced, respectful, appreciative but also to adapt and accept all people living worldwide despite their race, religion, or social status.

Follow Latest trends

Changes in the modern world are meant to be inescapable and imminent. Gripping on to traditional ways would not allow anyone to survive for long, since the patterns and designs in every industry evolves each second. Hash tags in Twitter connect all the related posts and update anyone with current trending topics. Social media has become the main source of keeping users updated and informed with latest news and events, technology, business, fashion, and entertainment [14].

Education & Business

With 87% of students being home-schooled during the pandemic, social media has now become a key player in educating younger generation [15]. Educators have been able to attract students in studies with the aid of interactive e- learning platforms. Continuous accessibility for education was maintained through online courses, lectures, tutorials and exams have become the accessible way of education. Social media has built a platform for lecturers, instructors, academics around the world to mentor and provide insights to young students and researchers' worldwide. Social media with its infinite number of informative pages on various academic disciplines has helped to nurture students with vast amount of knowledge. Useful contents of experts are shared in many social media platforms to sharpen minds and build confidence among the youth. There are platforms which provide study groups to connect students across the world with similar fields of interest. It exposes students to interact with international students, gain knowledge and learn new methods of studying.

The first step for entrepreneurship is considered as creating a social media account. It allows anyone to share information, develop a brand and reach customers. Doing online business with more than 4.2 billion social media users does not require a penny or any exceptional skills. It allows to observe the competitors easily, reach international markets, increase revenue, increase website traffic and works towards success while micro targeting the customers. Job networking sites also can be used by skilled professionals for recruitment by creating professional profiles to connect with business organizations. Applications such as LinkedIn are used to help in finding jobs, highlight unique skills, to connect with experts, exhibit knowledge and be a part of group discussions in key companies. A study revealed that 87% of recruiters use LinkedIn to hire candidates. Attending virtual social media conferences provide opportunities to hear from professionals and to become success in the industry. [16]

Social Services

There are many active organizations that use social media for social services and offer support for the wellbeing of human and wildlife. Even, 'PearlProtectors' organization in Sri Lanka requested aid of new inventors through Facebook to create a 'Nurdle – free' Sri Lanka. Sharing certain experiences on social media helps other users to be prepared, react or avoid the same situation the other has experienced. Since the young generation is more active on social media, it helps them to be aware of the surrounding and raise their voices against corruption and be a part of movements.

3.4 Identifying the negative impacts of social networking sites in the social lives of young adults.

Social networking sites have become a part of everyone's life. Young adults use social networking- sites in every action they do. The increased use has given many negative impacts. The negative impacts can be categorized as follows.

The negative impact of social media on young adults

-Health Hazard

-Cyber threat

-Inadequacy about self and life

Mental health

Issues regarding mental health related to the use of social media have been escalating with time. Studies show that young adults are more vulnerable to mental hazards caused by social media [17]. The problems include depression, anxiety, isolation, and fear of missing out (FOMO). Continuous scrolling through the night leads to lack of sleep, comparison with fake posts, greediness on more likes and positive comments, and lack of personal communication led to depression, anxiety, and isolation [18]. FOMO is the nervous feeling of not being invited to a social event or the feeling of not going to a social event. A Survey indicates that every 2 out of 3 young adults experience this disorder regularly [19]. A US study found out that social media use has a sturdy impact in developing depression, anxiety, isolation, and FOMO among young adults damaging their social lives [20].

Physical health

Maintaining good physical health in young adulthood will build self-confidence and maintain healthy living which affects social lives. Unfortunately, social media engagement has led to poor physical care.

Vision syndrome, brain disorders, Obesity, poor diet, and eating disorders are major negative impacts of social media. Incessant social networking has proven to affect 87.7% of young adults' vision [21]. Stanford University studies have shown that social media engagement has negatively impacted brain functions. Reduced efficiency of multitasking, less attention time, poor learning outcomes are few to mention [22]. Perpetual scrolling has also led to a lack of body exercise causing obesity. External validation and body image dissatisfaction have triggered poor diet and eating disorders. Studies conducted on the association between social media usage and body index (BI) on young adults have concluded stating social media exposure has a negative impact on BI and food choices [23].

Cyberthreat

Cyber threats are malicious activities to steal, damage, or sell one's digital information without their consent. In a recent analysis, it was found out that young adults are the most vulnerable group to cyber threats with 10% growth over 6 months [24]. According to the i-SAFE foundation, every one in three young adults has faced cyber threats [25].

Cyberbullying has become a severe result of cyber threats. The form of bullying, done digitally to hurt someone is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying also directly affects one's mental health resulting in weaker social lives.[26]

Inadequacy about self and life.

Unrealistic views and perfect luxurious life pictures are shown on social media. Young adults are progressing more towards seeking attention, receiving more followers. As a results addiction, reduced face-to-face interactions, low self-esteem, distraction from life goals, and lack of independent thinking are rapidly growing among young adults [27].

Addiction consumes time and leads to interpersonal and social problems. [28]. Studies say the dopamine hit from social networking sites causes addiction [29].

According to a Princeton University study, more than 50% of young adults who use social media agree that those sites make them feel inadequate, with 57% saying social media creates ''overwhelming pressure'' to succeed in life [30]. Recent studies have also concluded that increased time on social media causes low self-esteem [31].

According to many psychologists, most of their clients are suffering from inadequacy about life due to excess social media use. More screen time has only achieved fewer life values [32].

3.5 Ways to overcome the negative impacts on the social lives of young adults.

Privacy and security

The significance of securing private information on social media platforms has not always been a successful achievement. The main cause of this difficulty is due to the policies that control these social networking sites. When you sign up, personal information you have given to them has automatically shown to networks in and out of your circle, hence we need to be aware in maintaining privacy sensibly on the internet [33]. Best strategic practices regarding privacy and security in social networking platforms are identified below:

• Maintain unique passwords, and regularly change them.

• Be mindful on social medias on giving too much information.

• Modify your social media settings and examine carefully on the privacy policies.

• Be alert on suspicious links and messages given by others.[34]

Health

Studies have indicated that elevated levels of online social comparisons are related with burdensome symptoms in young adults [35]. The virus outbreak event that took place in 21st century, has led worldwide hazard to the mental health. One of the successful methods to battle against such mental health is elaborated below,

- **Online peer-to-peer support and mental illness**

Preliminary studies have highlighted the significance of individuals' connecting and sharing human emotions and be accepted by a group of people [36]. Self-esteem and self-efficacy have considered to be increased due to social groups [37]. A better recovery, personal wellbeing and social integration could be achieved for those who has life issues in common, sharing with each other [38]. The decision to reach out and discuss personal health issues occurs at a time when someone is going through significant huddle of social life challenges [38]. People are encouraged to seek support and socially connect with others, which is an important step towards a successful recovery journey [40].

Social media has created a platform for oneself to engage and identify people with similar serious mental illness at their convenience, without revealing their identity [41, 42]. Researchers have expressed their opinions, that social networking sites can be beneficial for the individuals who choose to share content, as well as individuals who look for health information without connecting with others [43, 44, 45].

This may help individuals to get better of mental health problems such as information processing challenges, social anxiety, or social interaction difficulties [46].

Battling against Cyber-bullying

Young people in Sri Lanka are becoming deeply vulnerable to the unwelcoming atmosphere brought on cyber-bully. The increased rate of bullies portraying innocent schoolgirls in uniform, "slut shamming", death threats and spreading explicit images or videos of people without their authorization, shows how the society of Sri Lanka has been entrenched in patriarchal community, needless exaggeration, and the custom of blaming the victims.[47]

Below are some important actions to be taken against the vile oppressors,

- **Report Cyberbullying**

It is important to document and report when cyberbullying occurs,

Before blocking the bully, collect evidence, by recording time, date and instances the cyberbullying occurred; save and take print outs of screenshots, emails, and text messages. You may exposure the bully in the social network but avoid forwarding and responding messages sent by them, since it may worsen the situation. Contact your country's authorities in charge of dealing with cyberbully complaints and provide them with your collected evidence.

- **Reporting Cyberbullying to Online Service Providers**

The terms of services established by social networking sites and internet service providers has established strict warning against cyberbullying. Analyze and check whether the content is appropriate according to the terms and conditions of the social media site. If you're not aware of blocking feature, learn how to through visiting social safety centers, and control your social media on who can contact you. Report the cyberbullying to social networking sites in such a way the actions can be taken against them for violation of service terms.

- **Report Cyberbullying to Law Enforcement**

Threatening violence against an individual. Sending or taking sexually explicit messages or photos of a person without their consent. In addition, spreading hate crimes and stalking. Cyberbullying involving these activities, should be brought to the attention of law enforcement. The form of cyberbullying differs according to states, thus consult your state's law enforcement for additional guidance.

- **Report Cyberbullying to Schools**

Schools are required to address anti-bullying process, if you have the accurate evidence on the cyberbully who is from the school you study, it is important to report to the school officials. They will implement necessary actions against cyberbully and inform prevention strategies [48].

3. Conclusion

Social media has become an inevitable part of everyone's life today. According to our research young adults are the highly influenced group by social media. Throughout our report, we have analysed many aspects of social media which influence the lives of young adults. Humans being social animals, have taken social media through escalating advances within a short span. It will also evolve into various forms in the future with artificial intelligence coming into use.

With the use internet, social media has a wide reach across the globe. Young adults all around the world are falling into various platforms of social media experiencing both positive and negative impacts. Young adults can connect, study, earn, voice their opinions through social media. Wider opportunities are opening for them. Unfortunately, they are mostly bound to the demonic side of social media, becoming its prey. Through appropriate steps, the negative impacts can be reduced. Awareness should be made among young adults of the safe use of social media. However, the negative impacts can only be reduced not erased. Social media has made the future of young adults is unpredictable. Whatever social media beholds in the future will hugely impact the life pattern of an entire generation.

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5. Appendices