

## **The Impact of Social Media on Social Skills and Emotional Intelligence among Young People**

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### **Abstract**

The current research looks at how social media affects young people's social skills and emotional intelligence (EI) development. Face-to-face encounters are declining as digital communication has grown, which raises questions about young people's capacity to acquire critical social and emotional skills. The study examines social media's positive and negative effects, concentrating on how it impacts interpersonal interactions, empathy, and self-awareness. Research indicates that but social media improves self-expression and connectivity, misuse can result in fewer in-person social contacts and emotional control issues. In order to promote healthy emotional and social development, the article emphasizes the necessity of a balanced approach to digital involvement.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Digital Communication, Empathy, Self- Expression, Emotional Control.*

### **Introduction**

Especially for young people who use it as their main communication tool, social media has become an essential element of modern life. The emergence of apps like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat has changed how people communicate, express their feelings, and develop bonds with one another. Social media raises concerns about the possible loss of traditional social skills and emotional intelligence, even as it offers chances for self-expression, learning, and global connectivity.

Goleman (1995) described emotional intelligence as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social abilities. These qualities are necessary for both personal growth and successful interpersonal connections. However, an over-reliance on digital interactions can impair young people's capacity for in-person communication, social clue interpretation, and the development of strong emotional bonds (Twenge, 2017). While some studies contend that internet communication lacks the depth and richness of face-to-face encounters, others believe that online connections may encourage new kinds of emotional expression (Walther, 2011).

This research aims to analyze the extent to which social media affects the development of social skills and emotional intelligence in young people. The study will explore both the benefits and drawbacks of social media engagement and propose strategies to encourage balanced digital and offline interactions.

## **Literature Review**

Young people's social skills and emotional intelligence (EI) have been greatly impacted by social media. This section examines the body of research on the connections between social media use and self-awareness, empathy, emotional control, and interpersonal skills. Some academics contend that social media improves emotional expression and connectedness, while others contend that it has a detrimental effect on emotional growth and in-person encounters.

### **1. Social Media and Communication with Others**

Social media platforms have changed how young people communicate, according to research. More honesty and identity development are made possible by electronic communication, which can lead to deeper online interactions (Walther, 2011). However, excessive social media use frequently results in less in-person interaction, which impacts social skills in the actual world (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). Young individuals who spend a lot of time on digital platforms could find it difficult to read nonverbal clues like body language and facial emotions, which are essential for productive social relationships.

### **2. Social Media Use and Emotional Intelligence**

Goleman (1995) described emotional intelligence as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social abilities. According to studies, social media can improve emotional intelligence (EI) in areas like self-expression and emotional support. Online communities, for instance, offer a secure setting where young people can express their feelings and look to their peers for support (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014). On the other hand, excessive screen time and a dependence on digital validation might exacerbate anxiety and impair emotional control abilities (Twenge, 2017).

### **3. Social Media's Contribution to Emotional Control and Empathy**

A crucial element of emotional intelligence is empathy, which enables people understand and experience the feelings of others. According to some research, internet relationships lack the emotional depth of face-to-face connections, even as social media promotes online action and global awareness (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011). Young people's self-esteem and emotional control may suffer as a result of social comparison brought on by constant exposure to carefully cultivated virtual identities (Chou & Edge, 2012).

### **4. Both favorable and unfavorable effects on the development of social skills**

Social media has a complicated effect on the development of social skills. On the one hand, social media sites like Instagram, Discord, and TikTok assist youth in expressing their creativity, networking, and working together on projects. Conversely, passive social media use, including perusing feeds without participating, can result in social isolation and a decline in in-person contacts (Keles et al., 2020). In order to promote healthy social development, educators and psychologists stress the significance of striking a balance between online and offline connections.

### Research Methodology

This study examines how social media affects young people's social skills and emotional intelligence utilizing a descriptive research design and secondary data sources. Examining prior studies, statistical reports, and current literature to have a solid understanding of the subject is ideal for secondary research.

#### 1. Research Design

The study's foundation is secondary data analysis, which entails gathering, examining, and combining data from previously published academic publications, reports, journals, and online databases. This method aids in finding trends and connections between social media use and how it affects the development of social skills and emotional intelligence.

#### 2. Data Sources

The research collects information from a number of trustworthy secondary sources, such as:

- **Academic Journals:** Peer-reviewed papers from databases including ScienceDirect, Springer, PubMed, and Google Scholar.
- **Books and Reports:** Works written by professionals in the fields of psychology, sociology, and digital communication (such as Daniel Goleman's work on emotional intelligence).
- **Government and Institutional Reports:** Research on the effects of digital media released by groups such as the Pew Research Center, American Psychological Association, and World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Statistical Data:** Reports and surveys from organizations such as UNICEF and Statista that shed light on the mental health and social media usage patterns of young people.

#### 3. Techniques for Gathering and Analyzing Data

- **Literature Review:** The study examines earlier studies on the impact of social media on social skills and emotional intelligence. To group insights into important domains including empathy, emotional control, self-awareness, and digital communication, the analysis of themes is utilized.
- **Comparative analysis:** compares data from several sources to find recurring patterns, inconsistencies, and research gaps.
- **Content Analysis:** Research on interpersonal skills, mental health, and social media use is analyzed to understand various viewpoints and interpretations.

### **Analysis**

The following part provides an overview of the secondary data currently available on how social media affects young people's emotional intelligence and social skills. Previous research findings, statistical data, and academic conversations on the subject form the basis of the analysis.

#### **1. Young People's Social Media Usage Trends**

According to studies, social media has taken center stage in the everyday lives of young people. 95% of American teenagers use social media, with YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat being the most widely used platforms, according to a Pew Research Center survey from 2022. In a comparable manner, Statista (2023) discovered that over 4.9 billion individuals use social media worldwide, with the most active users being young people between the ages of 13 and 24.

Even though social media improves connectivity, excessive use of it has led to worries about decreased emotional intelligence, a rise in mental health problems, and a decline in face-to-face communication abilities (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020).

#### **2. The Impact of Social Media on the Development of Social Skills**

##### **✓ Positive Effects:**

- Young people can stay in touch, make online acquaintances, and work together on creative initiatives thanks to social media.
- People can express ideas freely on platforms like TikTok and Discord, which also help people become better communicators in online settings (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014).
- Additionally, introverted people may find it easier to express themselves in virtual encounters than in person.

##### **✓ Negative Effects:**

- According to a study by Twenge (2017), more screen time is associated with fewer in-person social contacts and trouble reading non-verbal clues including tone of voice and facial expressions.
- An excessive dependence on text-based communication can hinder young people's capacity to have meaningful, in-person interactions (Walther, 2011).
- According to research, passive social media use—scrolling without participating—can result in interpersonal skills deficiencies and social isolation (Keles et al., 2020).

### **3. Social Media Participation and Emotional Intelligence**

According to Goleman (1995), self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are all components of emotional intelligence (EI). Social media has conflicting effects on various elements, according to research:

#### **✓ Self-Awareness and Control of Emotions**

- Young people frequently edit their online identities in order to conform to social norms, which can result in problems with self-worth and self-esteem (Chou & Edge, 2012).
- Excessive use of social media has been associated with higher levels of anxiety and sadness, which can impact one's ability to regulate emotions (Keles et al., 2020).

#### **✓ Digital Communication and Empathy**

- Online interactions promote tolerance by connecting users to a variety of viewpoints and global challenges (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011).
- On the other hand, trolling on the internet and harassment cause people to become less attentive to other people's feelings (Best et al., 2014).

### **4. Social Media's Effect on Behavior and Psychology**

According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2022) and the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), social media has a number of psychological effects on youth, including:

- Dopamine-driven engagement: Platforms employ technologies to promote constant scrolling, which has an impact on emotional stability and impatient control.
- Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): Many users experience stress and anxiety as a result of societal pressure to stay up to date.
- Diminished Attention Span: According to a Microsoft (2019) study, using social media frequently has been linked to a reduction in attention span, which has an impact on social interactions in real life.

## 5. An overview of the results

Key Aspects	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Social Skills	Enhances global networking and digital communication	Reduces face-to-face interaction and practical communication skills
Emotional Regulation	Provides communities for emotional support	Causes emotional instability, tension, and anxiety.
Empathy	Makes people more conscious of societal issues	Lessens emotional sensitivity (cyberbullying, trolling)
Self-Awareness	Promotes the expressing of oneself	Causes problems with self-esteem and irrational self-comparisons.

## Conclusion

Social media influences young people's social skills and emotional intelligence in two ways, according to secondary data analysis. Excessive and uncontrolled use has been connected to a decline in in-person social connections, reduced empathy, unstable emotions, and mental health problems, even as it improves digital communication, worldwide networking, and access to emotional support communities.

## Key Findings

### 1. Social Skills

- Young people can work together online and communicate quickly thanks to social media (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014).
- Still, an excessive dependence on digital connections weakens nonverbal communication abilities, making it more difficult for youth to interpret voice, gestures, and facial emotions in real-world situations (Twenge, 2017).

### 2. Emotional Intelligence (EI):

- By raising awareness of global challenges, exposure to a variety of internet content can improve empathy (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011).
- However, the absence of emotional depth in digital contacts can result in tolerance to online bullying and less responsiveness to the feelings of others (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020).
- Regular comparisons on social media lead to inflated expectations of oneself, which in turn cause emotional pain and problems with self-esteem (Chou & Edge, 2012).



### 3. Impact on Behavior and Mental Health:

- Overuse of social media is directly linked to psychological distress, anxiety, and depression, according to research from the American Psychological Association (APA, 2022) and the World Health Organization (2021).
- Dopamine-driven engagement and FOMO lead to compulsive social media habits that impair emotional stability and impulse control (Twenge, 2017).

### Recommendations

1. **Balancing Digital and Real-Life Interactions:** Promoting in-person as well as virtual communication can aid in the development of greater emotional intelligence and social skills.
2. **Digital Literacy & Emotional Awareness:** Parents and educators should teach kids how to use social media in a healthy way, including how to control their emotions and show empathy when they're online.
3. **Mindful Social Media Use:** Reducing screen time and encouraging meaningful online conversations as opposed to mindless scrolling can enhance mental health.

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