

# Social Media Addiction in Adolescents and Young Adults: Exploring the Mental Health Implications and Interventions

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to understand the factors contributing to social media addiction and its subsequent impact on adolescents' mental health. It also explores the various interventions especially the role of parents in mitigating this effect.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on a systematic review of existing literature submitted in databases such as Pub Med, Psych Info, and Google Scholar. The selection criteria included studies published in English from 2015 to 2021, focusing on social media addiction, mental health and interventions. It also highlights the psychological theories underlying social media addiction and mental health outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior research indicates a growing concern about social media addiction among adolescents, with studies highlighting its association with negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression and poor academic performance. The review discusses and investigated excessive social media use.

According to a paper by Hou, Y. et. al, social media addiction is defined as a “ behavioral addiction characterized by excessive use of social media, resulting in a negative outcomes such as neglecting other important activities, reduced productivity, and social isolation.”

Researchers are exploring different psychological perspectives and theories that try to explain why some people especially adolescents develop social media addiction and what motivates them to use social media excessively. Here are some of the most cited ones:

**Motivational perspective.** This perspective focuses on the psychological needs and gratifications that social media use fulfills, such as entertainment, information, social support, self- expression, or identity formation. For example, people may use social media to escape from boredom, or to present themselves in a favorable way [Ryan et. al.,2014]. □

**Neurobiological perspective.** This perspective suggests that social media addiction is associated with changes in the brain's reward system and chemical processes. For example, social media use may trigger dopamine release in the brain, which creates a pleasurable sensation and reinforces the behavior. Over time, this may lead to habit formation and addiction [Turel et.al,2014]. □

**Dispositional difference perspective.** This perspective argues that social media effects are not uniform, but

depend on individual personality traits and susceptibility, and users may vary in their psychological and social orientations that make them more or less vulnerable to media influences. For example, individuals with low self-esteem, high anxiety, or low self-control may be more susceptible to social media addiction [Andreassen et.al., 2016].

Researchers are also exploring several interventions that can help mitigate the negative effects of excessive use of social networking sites. Here are some examples: □

**Cognitive-behavior therapy [CBT].** CBT is a type of talk therapy that helps people to identify and change negative thought patterns and behaviors. CBT can be used to address social media addiction by helping individuals develop healthier coping mechanisms and reduce their reliance on social media [Griffiths, M.D. et.al.,2014]. □

**Mindfulness based interventions.** These interventions aim to increase awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to the use of social media platforms. Mindfulness practices such as meditation and yoga have also been shown to have positive effects on mental health outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and depression. These interventions can also help individuals identify triggers of social media use and develop strategies to manage them [Van Gordon, W. et. al, 2018]. □

**Family based interventions.** These interventions involve family members in the treatment process and aim to improve communications within the family. Parents can play an important role in helping their children to develop healthy social media habits. This can include setting limits on social media use, monitoring their children's social media activity and encourage them to participate in offline activities such as sports hobbies, and spending times with friends [Moreno, M.A. et.al., 2011]. □

**Digital detox.** A digital detox involves taking a break from social media and other digital devices for a period of time. This can help to reduce feelings of anxiety, and stress associated with social media use [Rosen, L.D. et.al., 2013].

## FINDINGS

The study found out that reducing or taking a break from social media use can help improve communication and relationships within the family parental mediated strategies are often used in families. Parents can set example of what responsible and healthy social media user by being mindful of their own social media habits and modeling positive behavior on their social media accounts.

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