SOCIAL NETWORKS: ROLE AND IMPACT IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract: In modern society, the influence of social networks is increasing due to technological advancements. This article analyzes the impact of social networks on education, culture, business, and personal life. The development of information technologies facilitates communication between people and accelerates globalization. However, this process has both positive and negative effects on social relationships. For example, the expansion of virtual communication may affect people's real-life interaction skills. In addition, the role of social networks in marketing and education is highlighted, along with their influence on the younger generation's mindset. The article also examines issues related to internet security, data reliability, and the effective use of digital technologies. The results of the study will help to better understand the role of social networks in modern society.

Keywords: Social network, Communication, Stress, Motivation, Anomie, Society, Information

The Impact of Social Networks on Mental Health

Positive Effects of Social Networks on Mental Health

1. Facilitating Communication and Support

Social networks provide opportunities to stay connected with distant friends and family, as well as to establish new acquaintances. This can help reduce feelings of loneliness. People experiencing depression or stress can join various online support groups to share their experiences and receive help.

2. Self-Expression and Personal Development

Many users utilize social networks to express their thoughts, showcase their creative works, or share knowledge. This contributes to their self-confidence and enhances motivation.

3. Raising Awareness of Mental Health

Numerous psychologists, doctors, and experts share valuable advice and resources on mental health through social networks. This helps individuals better understand their psychological well-being and seek assistance when needed.

Negative Effects of Social Networks

1. Comparing Oneself to Others

On social media, people often present only the best aspects of their lives. Watching others' "perfect" lives may lead users to feel unsuccessful or undervalued, potentially resulting in low self-esteem and depression.

2. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Observing friends attending exciting events or keeping up with the latest trends may lead to FOMO syndrome, causing anxiety and emotional pressure.

3. Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

Anonymity on the internet often leads individuals to engage in negative behavior toward others, such as criticism or harassment. Victims of cyberbullying may experience stress, depression, and low self-esteem.

4. Sleep Disorders and Reduced Focus

Many users develop an addiction to social media, leading them to stay up late or become distracted by constant notifications. This results in fatigue, stress, and decreased productivity.

Scientific Studies

Many researchers have conducted scientific studies on social networks. Robert Merton's theory of anomie analyzes the weakening of normative rules in society and the imbalance between personal behavior, particularly in relation to goals and means.

The term "anomie" was introduced by Émile Durkheim to describe a state where social norms weaken or disappear. Merton expanded this concept, presenting anomie as a social problem that arises when there is a discrepancy between the goals set by society and the means available to achieve them.

Merton's theory states that the display of wealth and fame as societal goals through social networks can exacerbate social inequality.

Recommendations

Limiting Screen Time – Managing time spent on social networks is crucial for mental health.

Choosing Beneficial Content – Avoiding negative influences and focusing on inspiring and educational content is essential.

Strengthening Real-Life Relationships – Face-to-face interactions with family and friends positively impact mental well-being.

Taking Breaks – Regular breaks from screens prevent excessive screen exposure and mental fatigue.

Conclusion

Social networks play a significant role in modern society. They greatly influence communication, information exchange, and business development. Through social networks, it has become easier to access knowledge, stay informed about current events, and engage in discussions on various topics. Maintaining relationships with distant individuals has become more convenient.

However, social networks also have negative effects, such as wasting time inefficiently, spreading misinformation, and causing psychological distress. Therefore, it is crucial to use social networks consciously and purposefully. When used effectively, social networks can offer numerous benefits, but users should also remain cautious about their harmful aspects.

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