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Social Media Use as a Factor of Managing Mental Health

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Within the framework of our work, using discussion methods and our own experience, the problems of the modern world are investigated, namely the spread of social networks and how they affect users.

The task of the scientific article is to reveal the following main issues: Is there any correlation between mental health problems and the time we spend online? Is social media actually deeply problematic to the users' mental health? Are there any upsides still, if so? And if not, what can we do to make our social media presence healthier and more welcoming?

In the course of the study, the author described such problems as the emergence of a danger to human mental health. On social networks, people view many photos and stories from the other people's lives, commenting on them and discussing them. However, with this background, various dangers may arise. Misinformation, harm to health, insults, toxicity – all this is also present in large volumes. As a result, mental disorders are common, which can be divided into three main categories: mood disorders, anxiety disorders and eating disorders.

On one hand, the use of social networks affects a person's condition. From idealized images of people and their lives on sites like Instagram that mentally affect the user to adhere to a certain form, to sites like Twitter that do not prevent their users from receiving death threats and getting their private

information exposed, a lot can go wrong when you try to form social connections or express yourself.

On the other hand, scientific analyses show that there is an inverse correlation. There's a study that suggested that higher social anxiety may be associated with passive use of some social networking sites (Shaw, Timpano, Tran, & Joormann, 2015). Passive use is defined by interacting with someone else's content without interacting with people, while active use is the opposite in this regard (Frison & Eggermont, 2016). According to a 2020's study by Erliksson, Lindner & Mörtberg, social anxiety is one of the mental disorders with the strongest correlation with passive social media use. Obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression and generalized anxiety disorder are less correlated with it. Most likely, the correlation is caused by the sense of "safety" that passive use provides.

On social networks, you can see a lot of photos with excessive use of beauty filters, some influential people that have plastic surgery promote it among their audience, and that entails consequences in the form of poor body image. "Eating Disorder Communities" base their goals on the idea that thin people are beautiful, and fat people are unhealthy. Overall, this information doesn't seem to be helping the social media's case.

Also, in the process of analyzing various sources, it turned out that social anxiety affects women and non-binary people more than men. Still, gender relations are widely discussed in research on Internet-related topics, while there is still too little research on how race affects online relationships. And even those few that are present are mostly written by white people, which does not give an idea of non-white perspectives.

However, along with the negative aspects of the issues under consideration, there are also some positive ones. A person who can't seem to find people with common interests offline can find someone to chat with online. Moreover, these

communities can be used for good. A large amount of information passes through the sites every day, and the ease of sharing it with your subscribers/followers makes it even easier to distribute it. Although, this simplicity may lead to some disadvantages, including, but not limited to, the spread of misinformation due to ignorance or malicious intent under the guise of spreading awareness on important issues. Nevertheless, the user can contact their relatives and communicate with them from a distance thanks to social networks. At the same time, there is an opportunity to find and share content for leisure and entertainment, or to experience some deep emotions, such as pride in yourself and the people you subscribe to.

So, the last question under consideration. How can we improve this situation? Firstly, we need to be more aware of ourselves. Secondly, we need to look out for each other and oneself when we face a crisis or need help. But at the same time, we shouldn't have any respect for hate speech and bigoted views. Finally, we must prevent misguidance by something that looks sincere, but is in fact harmful and destructive, by using our critical thinking.

In conclusion, we'd like to say that the diversity of social media, the people on them and the issues that arise are those of big interest, so we'd suggest the scientific community to perform more research on this topic. But after all, diversity should be present everywhere – including research groups.