Impact of social media on people's mental health and well-being

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**Introduction**

Social media is a relatively new medium that interacts with the wellbeing and mental health of people. Over the course of the past 10 years, it is obarrrbserved that social media has brought several changes, taking into account that it is embedded in the daily life of people. Orben, et al. (2019) highlights that the greatest ratio of social media users are 16 to 22 years old. Observation by Berryman, et al., (2018) reveals that social media has changed our lives dramatically, ranging from access to general information and finding people to choose different services, products and other information avenues. Social media has facilitated access to diverse information. It would not be wrong to say that individuals and business have numerous options to promote services and products by reaching a wider audience and paving the way for targeting. According to Erfan, et al. (2018), there are a lot of applications that can assist in everyday task by providing both advice and support along with teaching new skills that can widen the horizon of thoughts. There are many other positive aspects of social media that can promote wellbeing. It includes facilitating self-expression and giving a voice that can connect an individual to people and resources out there in the world. O’Reily, et al. (2018), asserted that social media has imparted motivation, opportunities and inspiration for the people. Adhering to double-sided impacts of every phenomenon, there are some negative aspects of social media as well. According to Bell, et, al., (2015), social media has added false information, oversharing, cyberbullying and trolls that have doomed society to destruction. Moreover, there are increased cases of poor sleep, anxiety and depression in people along with an increased rate of addiction.

**Review Method**

In order to collect relative information, survey of articles was conducted by using the ProQuest Database. The search terms for survey of articles were, “social media”, “mental health” and wellbeing. The results were limited to “articles”, “sociology”, “psychology” and reviews only taking into account that only those articles were used that were published between 2019 to 2014. After that, the abstracts of the resulting matches, “83” were read and they were categorized in terms of research method and subject. Among the selected articles, 10 were rejected because they were not directly related to the topic. After analyzing the relevancy of content 6 articles were chosen that are used as representative of the topic.

**Discussion**

According to the research conducted by O’Reilly, et, al., (2018), it is asserted that social networking sites have gained significant popularity in the past few years where there is a direct relationship between mental health problems and web-based platforms. This study investigated this relationship by conducting research on the students of middle and high school living in Ottawa Canada. The data was collected by using 753 students in which 55% were female up to 14 years rest were above 14 years, the information was derived from Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey. The research used multinomial logistic regression analysis of determining the association. The results reveal that about 54.3% of students were using social networking sites for more than 2 hours each day while only 20% said that they don’t use it at all. The percentile of 54.3% of students were also reported to have unmet needs of mental health support. This study clearly asserts the negative impact of social media on human wellbeing. Although it was very informative research, still there are some gaps that are found such as this research only included female participants. The research would have been more informative if both male and female participants would be included because it is assumed that girls have a more self-oriented approach, they spend a lot of time at home so it can be one of the causes that they are found to be using more apps as compared to the male population. O’Reilly, et, al., (2018) has conducted research by treating social media and social and mental wellbeing as a variable, where one is affecting others. The comparative analysis has provided a greater insight into the facts and figures that are associated with this research. This research can be used in the long run because of its effective methodology, however, the inappropriate sample is the only gap that has questioned the validity and universality of research.

Orben, et, al., (2019) studied the association between digital use and adolescent wellbeing by using empirical evidence that was based on a secondary analysis of the information that was retrieved from large scale social datasets. In this research, data was retrieved from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention Monitoring the Future and, UK data service. The collected data was analyzed by using correlational analysis. As there was a greater risk of methodological challenges so specification curve analysis was used to repress the probability of errors. After this research, it was concluded that the association between technological use, especially social media is negative but it is small, taking into account that the variation in well-being was found to be 0.4% only. Orben, et, al., (2019) conducted highly informative research but this research has no association with different features of research such as time limit such as that data was chosen randomly and the approach towards utilization of data changes with feasibility, accessibility and interest that is continuously reinforced. Orben, et, al., (2019) has conducted empirical evidence as an approach to define the relationship between the subjects. This research is errored or misfit in the context of sampling because using some defined sample such as information retrieved from CDCPM comprises of the varied population but restricting population and the past researchers to some time span would have added to the research. However, this research presents both qualitative and quantitative data that improve the effectiveness of research and it the best guide to understanding the influence of social media. It is asserted that a comparison of qualitative and quantitate data sources assert that qualitative data is most effective and authentic leaving behind ethical consideration that is equally found in two methods. A comparison infers that the researcher has made understanding easier by using two approaches simultaneously.

Berryman, et, al., (2018), conducted a research to find a relationship between use of social media and mental and social wellbeing of people that was proceeded by conducting a correlational study that examined 476 adults taking into account the time that was spent on social media. In accordance with the past studies, it was assumed that social media use is linked with negative health outcomes such as loneliness suicidal thoughts and decreased empathy. As a result of the correlational study, it was indicated that the use of social media is not actually predictive of causing any kind of mental illness however, it can cause and provoke particular negative behaviour that can affect social wellbeing. Moreover, it is asserted that vague booking was predictive of provoking suicidal thoughts and ideation. It suggests that this particular behaviour is actually a warning sign of some complex issues in the long run. In a nutshell, the overall results of the study revealed that the concerned of social media use can be misplaced. Research by Berryman, et, al., (2018) is more content-oriented but this research is limited by variable because the variable may undergo changes under the impact of vague booking. The result of his research is somehow complex because there are numerous themes that are indicated but there is no actual value that could defend the theme. Research by, Berryman, et, al., (2018) is appreciable in the context of sampling and the population that is used to conduct research. He used a correlational study that is one of the effective and informative approach to collect data. Moreover, he used correlation analysis that is authentic and appreciable.

Erfani, et, al., (2018) conducted research to investigate the use of social networking sites and social media websites. He analyzed that social media sites are becoming one of the major parts of the lives of people, taking into account that it is one of the issues to be discussed and investigated. He conducted a systematic review in order to set the foundation of groundwork meant for understanding the relationship between the users of the social networking sites and the psychological and sociological impact that is left on users. He reviewed the articles published between 2003 to 2016 and segregated them in terms of the context of abstracts. After an exegetical analysis, it was revealed that using Social Networking Sites casts both positive and negative impact on user’s social life as well as psychology adhering to the stance of “well-being”. Research by Erfani, et, al., (2018) is one of the efficient approach to analyze the relationship between social media and social and wellbeing of people. However, this research is limited by the equal support to two ideologies. A systematic approach can be defined by both qualitative and quantitative data so researcher could have supported his research with some quantitative data. Research by Erfani, et, al., (2018) is an informative source, that can give critical insight into the understanding of the topic, taking into account that this research stands all the requirements of good research, leaving behind representation of data.

Bell, et, al., (2015) conducted research to analyze the impact of social media on mental health and social wellbeing of adolescents. He used empirical research techniques in order to proceed with the research taking into account the impact that social media is causing on people. The central question was to defend how adolescents are perceiving social media especially as a resource that can help to gain knowledge. adhering to the social media and other sociological discourses, focus groups were used. The research included six focus groups that were used for the time period of about three months, including 54 adolescents who were from 11 to 18 years old. The selected population was recruited from the school in Leicester and London. After using thematic analysis, it was suggested that researchers find social media as a threat to their social and mental wellbeing. The research concluded in three different themes, anxiety disorders, a platform of cyberbullying and social media as an agent of promoting addiction. Although Bell, et, al., (2015) has imparted effective and thought-provoking research to demonstrate the relationship between social media and wellbeing but this research is limited by the multiplicity of themes. Adhering to a single theme and justifying it with a staunch approach could have resulted in a positive understanding and productive approach. Research by Bell, et, al., (2015) is another informative research that satisfies all the requirements of good research. However, this research could have been improved by revealing quantitative results, as well as adhering to a single theme because the research is guided more by prediction rather than justifications.

Verduyn, et, al., (2018) conducted research to know if social media is enhancing or diminishing the social and mental wellbeing of people or not. This research was guided by qualitative analysis that revealed that there is a negative relationship between the use of social media websites and the wellbeing of the one who is using it. However, it was also found that there is a positive relationship between the user and the social media websites taking into account that the positive relationship was more robust than negative relationship. The study ended by adhering to policy implications as both negative and positive aspects were found as a result of research. The research by Verduyn, et, al., (2018) is both, encouraging and informative but it is limited by time constraints and the insufficient selected population. In fact, this research lacked adequate sampling because of lack of selected population. The research conducted by Verduyn, (2018) is also effective and well-evaluated but there are some points to consider such as there is no well-justified fact or figure that supports some authenticity of figure, either in methodology nor in the result. However, this research asserts future research requirement that is one of the positive impacts because guiding future research facilitate research.

**Methods**

There are different methods of conducting research. The most frequently used methods are either qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research deals with the analysis of data by adhering to a qualitative approach while the quantitative approach is the quantitative representation of data that is collected and processed. Review of literature and data analysis revealed that different researcher used different methods for processing data. Berryman, et, al., (2018) used regression analysis as a method for analyzing data, it is one of the quantitative approaches that use statistical data and quantification of data. This analysis is made by finding a relationship between different variables, defining them as dependent or independent. In contrast, Orben, et, al., (2019) and Berryman, et, al., (2018) used correlation analysis in order to analyze collected data, it is also one of the quantitative methods of data evaluation. this method uses statistical evaluation to find a relationship between variables. It is asserted that the only difference between two methods is regression analysis that indicates the changes casted on one of the variables while correlation analysis finds the synchronization of two variables.

Erfani, et, al., (2018) used a systematic review to analyze the relationship between social media and its impact on the life of people. It is proceeded by the collection of secondary data that is critically appraised by research studies. This method can be presented by both qualitative and quantitative ways. He used a qualitative approach to show the findings. Bell, et, al., (2015) and Verduyn, et, al., (2018) conducted qualitative research to find the relationship between social media websites and the social wellbeing and psychology of people. However, the most significant point is, this research is more confined to aspects such as time limit and content. Moreover, it is asserted that the research of Verduyn, et, al., (2018) ended on both positive and negative impact while Bell, et, al., (2015)'s research led him to a single justification only.

**Conclusion**

After an exegetical analysis of past researches, method and revealed results, it is asserted that social media influences social and psychological wellbeing. Each of the researchers has given different insight by highlighting different dimensions. Although there are some gaps and limitations, still each of the researches has played a central role in guiding research towards a strong conclusion that although it is understood that social media has both positive and negative impact on mental health and social wellbeing, still there are a lot of dimensions and areas of discussion to be considered as outcome. In future, a lot of research needs to be conducted in defining the difference of psychological impact of social media on males and females. Moreover, there have been different ethical and moral dilemmas that have been found as a result of great screen time. As the existence of both positive and negative impact is proved, a lot of research is required to analyze the facts and figures in terms of impact such as societal dimensions, how they are affected or benefited and how human psychology is enlightened or changed under the impression of social media. In a nutshell, an insight into the sub-features and minor impacts are required that can become major in the long run.

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