

## **THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION IN STUDENTS: SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES AND PREVENTIVE APPROACHES**

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**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada talabalarda ijtimoiy tarmoqlarga qaramlik hodisasi nazariy va amaliy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Global axborot oqimi, virtual muloqot va raqamli texnologiyalar shiddati ortib borishi bilan ijtimoiy tarmoqlardan haddan tashqari foydalanish talabalarning ruhiy salomatligi, akademik faoliyati va ijtimoiy munosabatlariga salbiy ta'sir ko'rsatmoqda. Maqolada qaramlikning shakllanish bosqichlari, yoshlar psixologiyasida yuzaga keladigan xususiyatlari, oilaviy va ijtimoiy muammolarga olib keluvchi oqibatlar batafsil yoritiladi. Shuningdek, xalqaro tadqiqotlar natijalari hamda mahalliy kuzatuvlar asosida profilaktika choralarini ishlab chiqish bo'yicha takliflar ilgari suriladi. Tadqiqotning nazariy va amaliy natijalari talabalarning raqamli madaniyatini shakllantirishda, ta'lim tizimida psixologik xizmatlar faoliyatini takomillashtirishda, ota-onalar va pedagoglarning raqamli muhitdagi rolini kuchaytirishda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Talaba, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, qaramlik, raqamli madaniyat, psixologik mexanizm, oilaviy munosabatlar, ta'lim samaradorligi, profilaktika.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье анализируется феномен зависимости от социальных сетей среди студентов с теоретической и практической точки зрения. В условиях роста интенсивности глобальных информационных потоков, виртуального общения и цифровых технологий чрезмерное использование социальных сетей негативно влияет на психическое здоровье студентов, их успеваемость и социальные отношения. В статье подробно рассматриваются этапы формирования зависимости, её особенности в психологии молодёжи и последствия, приводящие к семейным и социальным проблемам. Также выдвигаются предложения по разработке профилактических мер, основанных на результатах международных исследований и локальных наблюдений. Теоретические и практические результаты исследования имеют большое значение для формирования цифровой культуры студентов, совершенствования деятельности психологических служб в системе образования и усиления роли родителей и педагогов в цифровой среде.

**Ключевые слова:** Студент, социальные сети, зависимость, цифровая культура, психологический механизм, семейные отношения, эффективность образования, профилактика.

Today, humanity has reached a point where it is almost impossible to live without social networks. An active person in society follows at least three networks in this virtual world: Telegram, Facebook, Instagram. So, is there a need for them? Social networks have a positive impact on our lives only in the following cases:

- they help us exchange information, experience, keep in touch with friends and colleagues hundreds of kilometers away, and keep abreast of events in their lives;
- they allow us to receive information about new vacancies faster;
- thanks to social networks, many people make new friends, and some find their soul mates;
- they help save on travel, transportation, and accommodation costs;
- they help many talents become known, gain strength, and gain recognition from complete strangers;
- for some, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram have become a source of income, they are also convenient for collecting money for treatment for those in need;
- currently, social networks are also helping law enforcement officers.

The list of such services can be continued for a long time. However, it also has a very big negative side - the problem of addiction to social networks.

What makes it so attractive? In the process of writing the article, I conducted research on this question, and based on my analysis, it turned out that those who work on the functions of social networks are constantly trying to make them better, more interesting, more diverse every day. As a result, the person who enters them wants to spend as much time as possible, spend money, buy something, etc. It is much easier to communicate on social networks; a person does not have his own image. After all, he can register not only under his own name, but also under an invented pseudonym, put an avatar (picture) or a photo of a stranger instead of a photo. He writes whatever he wants, does not shy away from insults, because in most cases he does not have to answer for what he says!

Addiction to social networks is one of the symptoms of Internet addiction. Researchers have described the phenomenon of Internet addiction more than once. In this regard, scientists include addiction to social networks in a separate group - addiction to "cyber-relationships": communication in chats, teleconferences, can eventually lead to the replacement of real ones with virtual friends and families. Researchers note that the time spent searching, communicating, virtual flirting, as well

as viewing photos from the lives of old acquaintances, former classmates and classmates in many cases exceeds the time employees spend on performing their work duties. As a result, some organizations prohibit employees from accessing social networks during work. But who would interfere with such communication at home?! Therefore, the problem cannot be completely eliminated.

Addiction occurs unnoticed. Such addiction does not develop immediately. Have you tried a drug once, twice, three times – that's it, it continues to draw you into its trap? And addiction to social networks can take months, and sometimes years. At first, a person logs into his account once a day, after a week - once a day, and after a few months, he starts to forget about his main work and starts updating his page several times an hour. People whose work is directly related to computers do not leave their profiles on social networks even at work (of course, if the management allows it). What is the point of looking at 100 photos of an acquaintance whom we have not seen for 5 years, instead of calling him? Maybe it would be better to spend this time learning a foreign language, talking to our parents, spouse or children? Or maybe we should sleep until we are full (because there are those among us who even give up sleep for social networks). Social networks waste a huge amount of time that we could spend on useful work.

Who “sits” on social networks? Theoretically, they can be divided into three main groups:

**Independent people.** Representatives of this group appear on social networks very rarely - once a day, a week or even a month. At the same time, they do not leave much information about themselves on their pages, sometimes they hide it altogether. They go to the network only when necessary - to look for someone's address or phone number, to respond to an important message. If they did not need to go to their page, they would not go to it;

**People in the transition period.** This group of “users” often go to their accounts - more than once a day. They do not need a specific reason for this - they just want to “flip through” groups or friends' pages: this way they get rid of boredom. In the transition phase, people usually “stay” for about two to three months, and then “jump” to the third type. Rarely does one return from this stage to the “independent” stage;

**Dependent people.** Unfortunately, this type of social network users is the most common. Such people do not forget to update their pages every 10-20 minutes - after all, someone might write! The resulting correspondence “about nothing” can last up to an hour and completely disconnect the “boss” from reality. If there is no news, he begins to feel unnecessary - what is it, no one is writing to me! Representatives of this

type spend at least 6-8 hours a day on social networks and spend their lives “online”. It is extremely difficult for them to live a day or two without their favorite networks. Often, lonely people become addicted to social networks - they thus create a “surrogate” communication for themselves. But in most cases, this loneliness is false and imaginary - that is, a person physically lives in society, but does not really communicate with those around him. The following categories of people are frequent guests on social networks: eventful people; teenagers who cannot communicate with their peers; young mothers – “when the baby is sleeping”; as well as extremely sociable people. Over time, the boundary between the real and virtual worlds disappears in the brain, and a person forgets that on a friend’s birthday, instead of sending flowers and a cake with emoticons, he can simply go to visit. Virtual communication becomes the only means of communication for addicts, and only an emergency, such as the lack of the Internet, can deprive them of their favorite pastime. Because they forget that there is an interesting, vibrant, real life around them! Moreover, addicts do not notice it.

If you notice that a loved one has started living on social networks, confusing virtual and real friends, be on the alert! Because the alienation from real life will only deepen later. According to some reports, every fifth or sixth family is breaking up because of social networks. Aren't these scary numbers? Sometimes divorces are caused by one of the spouses devoting more time to the Internet than to their family. Or one of the spouses starts flirting on social networks. No one likes to see their partner's romantic correspondence with another social network user. Thus, loneliness becomes a reality rather than a fiction. It is very difficult to "get rid" of social networks alone. As the name suggests - a network! There are too many opportunities and interesting things that seem to be achievable on them. Therefore, the sooner the “victims” loved one’s act, the higher the chances of quickly and effectively returning him to real life. Often, this is difficult to do without the support of experienced psychologists.

According to meta-analyses, the average level of addiction to social networks among university students around the world is between 18–23%. It was found that this figure is higher in Asian countries (22.8%), and relatively lower in European countries (15–17%) (Shannon H. et al., 2022).

Impact on academic performance: Studies have shown that the average GPA of students who spend more than 3 hours a day on social networks decreases by 0.4 points. In particular, being active online during class can distract attention due to “multitasking” and reduce learning efficiency.

**Psychological consequences:** Excessive use of social media is moderately associated with depression, loneliness, and anxiety syndromes. “FoMO” (Fear of Missing Out) — “fear of missing out” — has been highlighted in the scientific literature as one of the main mechanisms of stress and mental instability in students.

**Sleep quality and health:** A study conducted on Bangladeshi students found that late-night use of social media increased insomnia and chronic fatigue, resulting in a decrease in sleep quality in up to 67% of students.

**Local context.** According to surveys among Uzbek students, the average daily time spent on social media is 4–5 hours. 60% of students admit to being online during class. This exacerbates the problems of academic discipline and time management.

**Preventive approaches.** Organize trainings on digital hygiene and time management in universities; Introduce social media “detox” weeks for students; Develop a culture of stress management and real communication through psychological services; Incorporate strategies for the proper use of technology in lesson design.

**How to get rid of addiction?** Few people can easily and painlessly get rid of this destructive hobby. Only those who can boast of strong willpower, who understand that they are wasting the time they spend on their loved ones, achieving their dreams, and gaining independent knowledge will succeed. However, if you are determined to change your life, try to regulate your time on social media in advance, and do not just go to your page. Make a list of things you need to do. Only after completing all the tasks can you log in to your favorite social network as a “bonus”. Another practical way is to communicate with friends in the real world, not in the virtual one. You can agree to go on trips together, go out into nature or sit in cafes (as long as there is free Wi-Fi there). Try to spend this time on relaxation, communication with friends, talking on the phone!

In the context of digital transformation, social networks have a two-way impact on the personal, psychological and intellectual development of students. On the one hand, they create the opportunity for rapid information exchange, access to educational resources and a global communication space. On the other hand, due to excessive use, new psychological risks are emerging, such as digital fatigue, social comparison bias and fragmentation of attention.

Foreign studies conducted in recent years have proven that there is an inversely proportional relationship between the intensity of use of social networks and cognitive efficiency. In particular, it has been found that multitasking slows

**down the learning process by up to 30 percent. At the same time, dependence on virtual “likes” and “reactions” leads to students' dependence on external factors for motivation, which weakens creativity and the ability to make independent decisions.**

An important aspect observed in the local conditions is that the culture of using social networks among students is not sufficiently formed. As a result, the principles of time management, healthy communication and psychological hygiene are violated, and the negative consequences of the digital environment are increasing.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider addiction to social networks not only as a personal problem, but also as an integral part of the digital policy of the education system and youth culture. A comprehensive approach - psychological screening, preventive training, moderate use of technology in the classroom and increased parental involvement - can preserve the positive aspects of the digital environment and minimize its negative effects.

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