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UWP001

Professor Schuhmacher

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Snapchat to Face to Face Chat

Cover Memo

My strengths of this paper is that I have a lot of personal knowledge and experience with my topic about Snapchat. This experience helps me know the ins and outs of the articles I read as well as interpreting the answers from my polls. My poll questions offered responses that are helpful to my project and gave honest, unfiltered feedback. The amount of responses I got for my other set of poll questions is also a strength of mine, as it is a large enough sample size to where I can make generalizations. I am proud of my paper overall, I enjoyed researching and diving deeper into my topic.

The weaknesses of this paper are probably the fact there were no articles specific to my topic and that correlation, so I had to make inferences but not stretch them too far. I also think my research methods section is not clear about my secondary resources. I don't know how to make that part of my research replicable as method sections are supposed to do. I also think my conclusion could be stronger, maybe longer but I am not sure how much information to put in the end.

Abstract

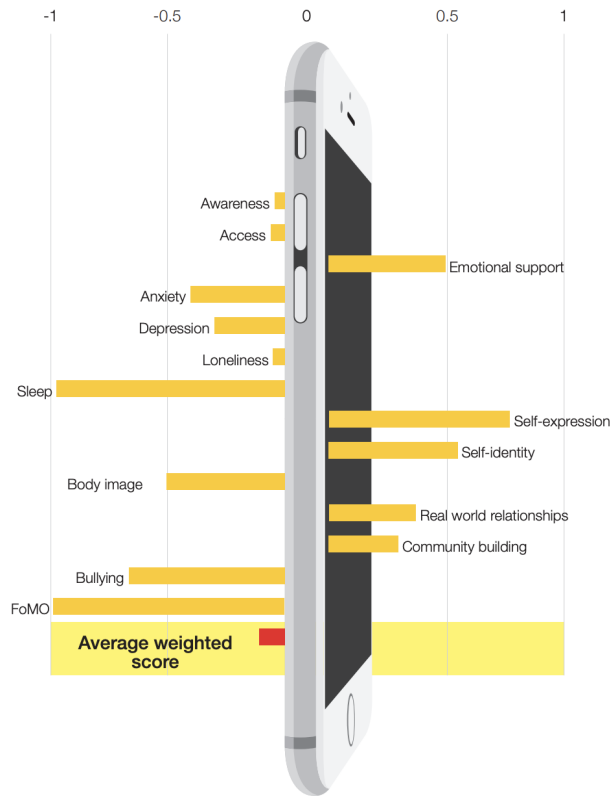
This social science essay discusses the effects the app Snapchat has on the social skills of people, primarily teenagers, today. After conducting research through polls on Instagram—which elicited yes or no responses and written responses—I discovered a common theme in regards to

what people enjoy about Snapchat. People enjoy how easy and fast it is to connect with friends or romantic interests casually, but they do not like the dependency on Snapchat to be the daily social interaction they get. I also found the feeling of connect and disconnect come simultaneously with Snapchat, resulting in feelings of loneliness. I hope this paper reaches those who use Snapchat or has had experience with it, as well as people that also notice dwindling social skills in teenagers today. This essay will teach its audience basic facts about the effects of social media and what characteristics of Snapchat affected teenagers in what ways.

Introduction

Social media has been around before my generation, there is not a time we know that is “before” media since it has been in young adults' lives since they were born, and since the late 20th early 21st century. From “Status of Mind: Social Media and Young People’s Mental Health” there is a statistic that “social media [is] more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol” (RSPH, 2017.) This fact goes to show the immense control social media has taken on people, especially young people’s lives. Phones are something people reach for first thing in the morning, and they are the last thing people look at before they go to sleep. In fact, people’s screen times are on average 3 hours and 43 minutes per day (Zalani, 2021.) We are constantly surrounding ourselves with other people’s lives. My question is specific to the app Snapchat, and Snapchat is described by the app store as “a fast and fun way to share the moment with your friends and family.” Truthfully, Snapchat first started as a hookup app where pictures are sent to one person, then completely disappeared. With an intimate app like Snapchat, it is hard to escape others. This reliance on telecommunication has hindered some people’s real life social skills, and since they don’t seem as necessary anymore, people can choose to avoid having them. The diagram below shows Snapchat’s positive and negative qualities.

Snapchat



(Smart Social, 2019.)

Research Methods

My primary sources were four questions I posted on my Instagram story, asking “What do you like about Snapchat” and “What do you dislike about Snapchat.” I also posted two polls, asking people to answer the following yes or no questions “Do you think Snapchat has negatively affected other areas of your life (family, sleep, alone time, exercise)” and flat out, “Has Snapchat negatively affected the people you interact with in real life (social skills, etc.)”

Choosing one social media app, Instagram, to answer questions about another social media app is a double edged sword. The benefits of doing this was me knowing I can reach a large audience so my data is statistically reliable, people had an easy, quick way to answer questions, and most likely people who had Instagram downloaded had Snapchat as well so I knew my audience was knowledgeable. The negative consequences of me choosing Instagram as a way to poll were, they are probably a little more biased or in favor of Snapchat if they had it downloaded. Additionally, people may have rushed to answer the question since it was given as just any other post, another scroll on someone's phone.

My secondary sources include a PDF about Social Media and Young People's Health and Wellbeing by Royal Society for Public Health. I found this paper useful for general knowledge of the effects of social media on primarily teenagers. It explored negative effects such as "anxiety, depression and poor sleep" (RSPH, 2017.) A video by Smart Social explained the app Snapchat and the dangers. I chose this article because the intended audience was caretakers who are concerned about their children's well-being. I wanted to see this perspective because it allowed me to look at Snapchat from a step away. I also read an article called "Sharing the small moments: ephemeral social interaction on Snapchat" by Bayerr, et al, which studied college students' social and emotional experiences on Snapchat.

Results

The results of my poll asking "Do you think Snapchat has negatively affected other areas of your life (family, sleep, alone time, exercise)" was 60% yes and 40% no. This was out of 222 answers. 134 answered yes and 88 no. 760 viewed the story post. The question "Has Snapchat negatively affected the people you interact with in real life (social skills, etc.) Was 47% yes and

53% no. This was out of 218 answers. 103 people answered yes and 115 people answered no. 720 viewed the story post.

I asked two open-ended questions with space for people to type “What do you like about Snapchat?” and “What do you dislike about Snapchat?” The answers were categorized by “Quick and Casual,” “Romantic/Social” and “Other” the answers are displayed in a chart in the section titled “Instagram Written Responses.”

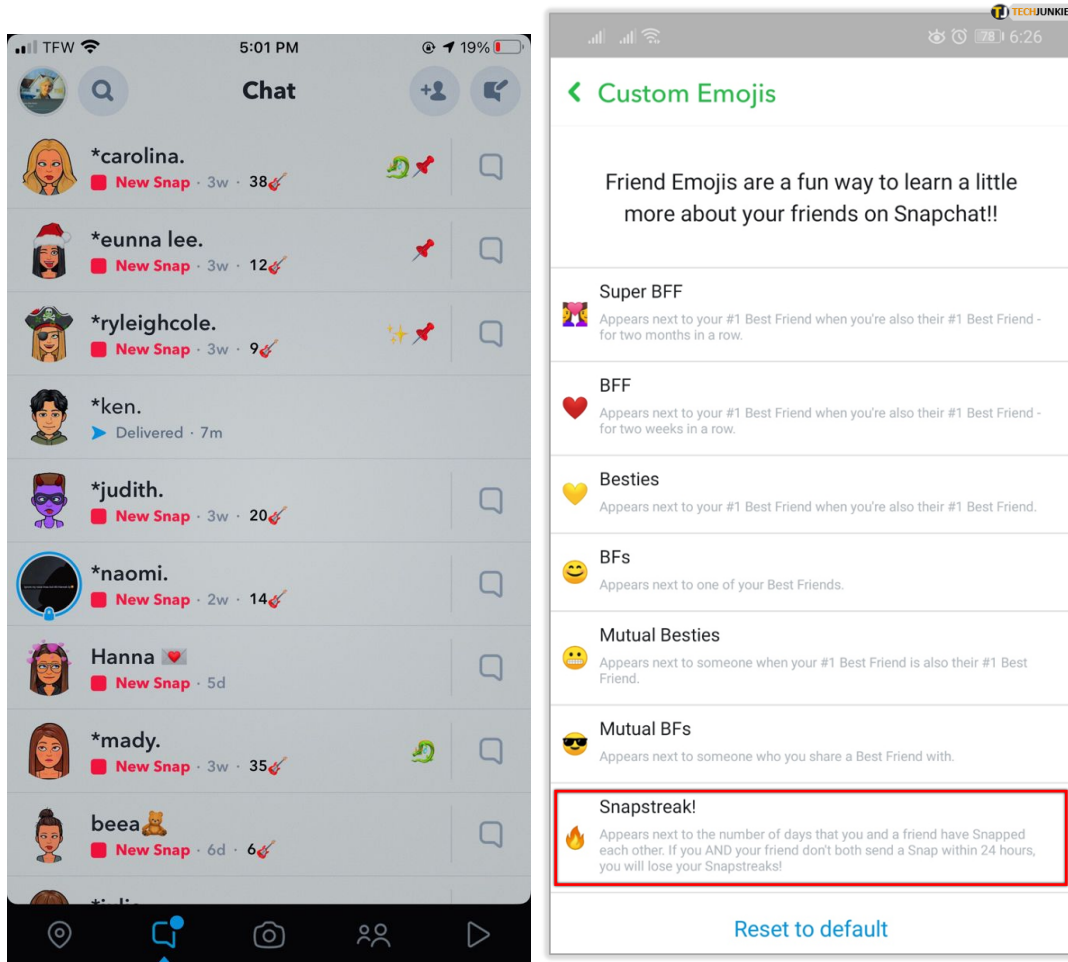
Discussion

The results from the polls on Instagram were a lot closer than I expected them to be. The results of my poll asking “Do you think Snapchat has negatively affected other areas of your life (family, sleep, alone time, exercise)” was 60% yes and 40% no, out of 222 answers. This question required my audience to be honest with themselves. I know the bar is set differently for every person. What do people consider as crossing the line into negatively affecting these areas in someone's life? The question “Has Snapchat negatively affected the people you interact with in real life (social skills, etc.) Was 47% yes and 53% no, out of 218 answers. These answers were even closer than the last one, but I was surprised that people answered honestly and admitted their social skills were declining because of Snapchat. What is interesting about asking these questions, is that the answers are self-monitored. Everyone’s judgment of what’s considered crossing the line into other aspects of one’s life is different. My aunt sent me a text saying she sent the questions I posted to her friend who has two teenage daughters, and they answered no to both questions asked. My aunt said “...But I know their mom thinks they are completely addicted to their phones and that it adversely affects their lives.”

After seeing the responses on the written Instagram polls, I have noticed some common trends among the answers. I notice that people enjoy the casualty of Snapchat, as it is described as “sharing mundane experiences with close ties” (Bayer, et al, 2015.) People described Snapchat using adjectives such as “lighthearted, less fake, casual, and quick.” This app being so informal makes it temporary, it is an “ephemeral” social media, meaning that the satisfaction and use lasts for a very short time, and it is “sometimes paired with anonymity, which both afford greater privacy for users” (Bayer, et al, 2015.) The downsides to this is that teenagers are used to putting minimal effort into communication, and communication with strangers can be avoided since they have easy access to the aforementioned close ties. Content on Snapchat is also specific to people, because it requires their audience to share content directly. There is a direct and known audience on Snapchat, where one sends a picture or video to one other, unlike on other social media platforms where you can reach hundreds of people indirectly at once. This was a positive aspect of the app, as seen by those who responded to the open-ended questions I posted who said they like how Snapchat is “direct” and allows people to “communicate with friends that live far away.”

I would argue that Snapchat is the most directly indirect social media app. People also had complaints about the innuendos on Snapchat such as seeing when someone opens your snap and does not respond, seeing others posting having fun although it was not meant for anyone specifically on their story, gives people FOMO. Knowing when someone screenshots and seeing someone's direct location through SnapMaps are all available to Snapchat users and it is an invasion of privacy. One person expressed they dislike “How easy it is to fall into its toxicity (higher snap score, more unopened snaps, etc)” These innuendos cannot be addressed directly or else one would come off as caring too much, on such a “casual” app. This lowers one’s self

esteem when they don't feel wanted, or as wanted as someone else seems to be when you can see who your best friend is, and who shares one with you. Snapchat's streaks feature (where consistently sending a picture between you and a friend each day increases your streak number) creates a hierarchy of friendships between people and does not allow you to go without the app for more than twenty four hours (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017.)



Source:

https://www.google.com/search?q=snapchat+streaks+and+emojis&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwinzouDqpI2AhUzHzQIHAYHBIIQ2-cCegQIABAA&oeq=snapchat+streaks+and+&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQARgAMgQIABAYOgcIIXDvAxAnOgQIABBDOgUIABCABDOLCAAQgAQQsQMqgwE6CAgAEIAEELEDOgYIABAIEB46BggAEAoQGFCoC1jwJWDwMWgAcAB4AIABuwKIAbMUkqEHNS4zLjYuMZgBAKABAaBC2d3cy13aXotaW1nwAEB&scient=img&ei=JfITWYuenN70-0PEPpo-YkAU&bih=817&biw=827#imgcr=YGCSJciVeYnkUM

Snapchat forces people to be attached to their phones and want to escape to be connected in “awkward social situations” They also don’t like how surface level it is. Teenagers are not getting deep over the phone, and that translates to real life with people feeling uncomfortable opening up too much. A study showed that Snapchat offers a quick feeling of social support, but nothing that will last long or benefit someone in the long run (Bayer, et al, 2015.) There is a lack of social support, and this hole needs to be filled in real life face to face but that is decreasing the more someone depends on Snapchat.

There is also a lot of romantic jealousy in Snapchat, as seen above one is able to see other peoples relationships with each other. But, an unwritten rule of Snapchat means no one can point this out or be hurt by it since it’s “just snapchat,” again, so “casual.” Another unwritten rule is that Snapchat is not used for communicating serious, negative, or emotions needing social support. This makes it hard for teenagers to express their emotions in real life because they feel it asks too much to meet in person to talk.

Through my own observations, I have noticed in teenagers a lack of eye contact when speaking to them since a lot are used to online communication. I have noticed people being more shy in person than through Snapchat, probably because it is easier to lay out your thoughts through text. I have also noticed teenagers not being able to speak in as long of sentences, or hold back and forth conversations as well as I notice older people do. Snapchat has a character limit, and I think this is a constraint for people to speak in normal conversation.

Conclusion

Snapchat has proved to worsen anxiety, depression, and people's feeling of closeness to their friends through real social support. It has also led to negative impacts on people's everyday lives and real life connections. This is an important subject to study and aid teenagers today to use technology properly. Technology is only going to advance in the future, and I hope in person social communication will not be lost. In jobs like customer service, proper in person communication is required for the job and it is an important aspect of every day relationships. Face to face communication sustains a positive mood throughout the day, and meaningful interactions are proven to increase self esteem.

Instagram Written Responses

The “Quick and Casual” Aspect

What do you like about Snapchat?	What do you dislike about Snapchat?
“It’s casual and not as fake as Instagram”	“How addicting it is and how it’s used as an escape from awkward social situations”
“Direct, real, less fake and edited”	“Forgetting what we were talking abt”
“Filters and quickly reply to friends”	“Feels like an obligation to respond”
“Light hearted, not as serious as Instagram”	“Chat”
“Temporary”	“People will literally Snapchat selfies without communication”

<p>“I can communicate easily with people I don’t live near like across the country or out the US”</p>	<p>“An extra thing I have to check”</p>
<p>“Memories and how easy it is to save stuff and have it all in one place”</p>	<p>“Sending photos :(“</p>
<p>“It’s easy to have a conversation with pictures also I like chats deleting for some convos I have”</p>	<p>“The concept of streaks and HAVING to respond at a certain time”</p>
<p>“Quick funny vids”</p>	
<p>“Quick dopamine and staying in touch”</p>	
<p>“Doesn’t require an attention span”</p>	
<p>“Quick communication with friends, can post funny things that would be too personal [for Instagram]”</p>	
<p>“I like how it’s easy to communicate with others through pictures and videos”</p>	
<p>“It’s casual”</p>	
<p>“Snap”</p>	

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So fast, attention spans are shorter. Even the responses were short and not full sentences.

The “Romantic/Social” Aspect

What do you like about Snapchat?	What do you dislike about Snapchat?
“Boobies”	“Boobies :(“
“See cute boy face”	“It gives me bad fomo so I stopped using it a lot during covid”
“Keeping in touch with my friends”	“For some it’s less about talking to people and friends and more of a competition to see who can have the most snaps”
“Easy to keep in contact with people I don’t normally text/call”	“Abuse from men, they think snap is an excuse to exchange nudes”
“People tend to post more fun stuff”	“The user base”
“For closer immediate circle rather than everyone you know”	“The emojis that represent the best friends or whatever”
“Seeing the faces of my friends everyday even though long distance” “That you can actually see people’s faces”	“Snap maps”

<p>“The memories of friends doing dumb shit”</p>	<p>“Using it as the main form of communication”</p>
<p>“Looking at memories, and swiping up on ppl's privs (I don't answer anyone tho)”</p>	<p>“No real conversation to be had, it's all revolving around you and what ur doing that sec”</p>
<p>“Documenting memories for myself, I don't really like to post”</p>	<p>“How easy it is to fall into its toxicity (higher snap score, more unopened snaps, etc)</p>
<p>“For other social medias”</p>	<p>“I don't like how it'll let people know when you ss lol”</p>
<p>“Being able to keep in touch with people globally in multiple ways (video, photo, text, ft, call)</p>	
<p>“I send 10m of snaps to my bestie in NYC daily and I love seeing her life IRL, we call it the Kate and Tate show (her name is Tatum) and we eagerly await ‘new episodes.’”</p>	
<p>“Seeing people's faces who I can't see often</p>	
<p>“Year ago today memories and group chat”</p>	

Other

What do you like about Snapchat?	What do you dislike about Snapchat?
“It shows u their bdays”	“News”
“Half swiping”	“ADS”
“Nothing”	“Absolutely everything”
“I don’t like it very much, but receiving videos is nice”	“Everything”
“Literally nothing”	“Everything else”
“I deleted it”	“Streaks”
“Nothing it’s played out”	“The very click-bait articles in that discover section”
	“The subscription stories/explore page”
	“It drains my life force”
	“The point system is stupid tbh”
	“It creates a lot of anxiety”
	“[People] start treating it as a numbers game and snap scores”

	“Streaks, the map is creepy I’d much rather just text or call”
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