

Social Media's Impact on the Moral and Character Development of the Children

Posted on October 17, 2019

Social Media and the Moral Development of Children

In the modern and global world today, technological advancements have entirely changed the picture of the world. Social media is one of the great inventions that provides several advantages to human beings. Social media is a platform that allows people to communicate with anyone in the world and share anything they want to share with the world. It makes people able to make friends across the globe and learn about different cultures and societal patterns of different people. The sharing pattern involves information, knowledge, pictures, videos, personal information, cultural trends, and so much more. These are all the traits of [social media](#) that are now famous all over the world today. But social media is also targeting different moral, ethical, and societal values of different societies in the world. The ways people are adopting for using social media are negatively impacting moral and ethical values. Despite having so many definite advantages, social media has several disadvantages along with negative impacts on social, moral, ethical, and societal values.

Social media is increasing the dependency of children and teens on its usage and impacting their social and moral values. The amount of time children spend on social media is too much in the United Kingdom. Nearly three-quarters of 12 to 15-year-old children have social media profiles and spend most of their valuable time on social media. The studies showed these children spend an average of 19 hours on social media platforms (Children And Parents: Media Use And Attitudes Report). The more time children and teens spend on social media, the more their personality traits will be influenced by its usage. A research study showed that the relationship between [social media](#) and [narcissism](#) is increasing, and the platforms of social media are negatively impacting the decision-making powers and empathy levels of children and teens ("Is Social Media Messing with Children's Morals?").

Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues conducted a study and found that social media platforms are impacting the moral and character development of children. The research study showed that parents' attitudes toward social media are negative, and more than half of the chosen sample of parents showed that social media is negatively impacting young people and their character. Not only is character development influenced by the usage of social media, but also the empathy level is decreasing due to the dependency on social media sites among children. The high rate of cyberbullying showed that more than 62 percent of children aged between 13 and 20 years are reported to suffer from cyberbullying. Moreover, people are now becoming the ones who are different on social media and have different personality traits in real life. According to a study, "This can lead

to ‘moral disengagement,’ where people can act in an immoral way while still viewing themselves as a moral person. And it is this ‘disengagement’ which is thought to encourage cyberbullying behaviors (“Is Social Media Messing with Children’s Morals?”).

A research study conducted by the University of Birmingham showed that parents are concerned about the social media usage of their children, and they are considering the factors that are negatively impacting the moral development of their children. More than half of the parents from the study sample believe that social media platforms are hindering the development of children and developing negative traits in their behavior, as observed by their parents (Watson).

Parental Concerns About Character, Self-Control, and Digital Dependence

The parents now believe that many character strengths are lacking in their children, due to the increased dependency rate of children on social media websites. More than 20 percent of parents believe that self-control and forgiveness factors are now lacking in their children, more than 20 percent of parents believe that their children lack honesty, and more than 18 percent of parents believe that humility factors are now lacking in their children due to the usage of social media websites. More than 50 percent of parents believe that their children now have negative traits such as hostility, anger, arrogance, ignorance, hatred, and bad judgment factors (“Social Media Sites Obstruct Children’s Moral Development, Say Parents”). It shows that social media websites are developing the personalities of the children in a different negative way, that their good personality traits are compromised, and the bad personality traits are increasing, such as lack of empathy, ignorance, hostility, and most importantly, the factors of hatred.

Due to the technological spread and the increased usage of smartphones, it is now effortless to use social media which is one of the important reasons for the social media spread among children. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are some social media apps that are greatly popular among children today. A research study conducted by Psych Central showed that social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram, are not developing moral development traits in children but to hindering these trait development in children (“Social Media’s Effects on Moral Development in Youth – Asheville Academy”). Several examples could explain these points, such as the impacts of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a pattern in which everyone is allowed to use the right of free speech, which leads to the bullying pattern.

People start bullying on social media platforms when something is not related to their minds. They start saying negative things about it. For example, when someone posts on social media and some people do not agree with that content, they may start to use negative words, and this could lead to a fight. The impacts of cyberbullying are even worse and result in different scenarios in which the children who face cyberbullying experience depression, tension, and mental pressure. Children who face cyberbullying start to suffer from mental illnesses, and that could lead to disastrous situations.

Online Identity, Honesty, and the Erosion of Prosocial Values

A study conducted in Canada revealed that college students who are consistent users of social media do not have any emotions regarding being honest and helpful toward other people. They are more concerned about their appearances on social media and the elements of fun. It shows that children and teens are more concerned about the fact that their appearance could be shown on social media sites, and they use social media for fun. But these traits and elements lead to the fact that their honesty level, moral values, and empathy are compromised (Johnson). “It’s important to point out that it could be a lot of things, like morally shallow people might be more drawn to a higher rate of social media use,” Anisette said. “But the magnitude of these relationships (between social media use and shallowing) surprised me—it affected everyone in some way, all sorts of people with all sorts of values” (Johnson).

It shows that online relationships are also the ones that impact the minds of children. Moral development is a factor that develops with the different levels of experimentation, but social media may, at times, become a hindrance to the real-life social explorations of children. Many experts are now suggesting that social media platforms such as Instagram, that heavily dependent on visual representation and photos, can influence the minds of children, especially their considerations between right and wrong acts. Photo sharing on social media has more influence on children than wording. When a photo collects different opinions from other people, it leads to the confirmation of all these comments in the mind of the child who posted it. Such as, when a teen has been told by their parents that drinking is not a good habit and is dangerous as well, but when he checks his social media platform, he checks the photos of numerous teens who posted their photos while drinking. Surely it will have a negative impact on the mind of that teen.

Despite having so many positive advantages, social media has several disadvantages along with negative impacts on social, moral, ethical, and societal values. Children and teens who are dependent on the usage of social media websites tend to have different behaviors, different moral and ethical values, and different forms of personality development. Most parents believe that their children are developing traits that are not linked to their moral development, and their [children lack the traits that improve](#) their moral and ethical development. Teens and children, who are consistent users of social media, develop the traits of hatred, ignorance, arrogance, selfishness, and dishonesty, while the traits that should be a part of their personalities, such as honesty, sincerity, loyalty, help, and support for other people, are now lacking in children. These scenarios and situations are relevant and should be addressed so that the children can learn about the important moral traits in their lives. These traits are necessary to make children ethical and responsible citizens of any country or society.

Works Cited

- "Is Social Media Messing With Children's Morals?." *The Conversation*. N.p., 2016. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.
- "Social Media Sites Obstruct Children's Moral Development, Say Parents." *Birmingham.ac.uk*. N.p., 2016. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.
- "Social Media's Effects On Moral Development In Youth - Asheville Academy." *Asheville Academy*. N.p., 2016. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.
- Children And Parents: Media Use And Attitudes Report*. 2015. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.
- Johnson, Chandra. "How Social Media Can Make Us Question Our Moral Values." *DeseretNews.com*. N.p., 2016. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.
- Watson, Kara. "Does Social Media Affect Moral Development? | Redbrick." *Redbrick*. N.p., 2016. Web. 22 Apr. 2018.