



Loneliness and Social Media Preference Among Adolescents

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INTRODUCTION



- Loneliness affects 61% of young adults in the US.
- Social media has made a dramatic rise among adolescents in recent years, with surveys estimating over 90% of teenagers use social media.
- Studies have been conducted on the connection between loneliness and social media use, but none have been conducted during a period of social isolation such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The purpose of this research study was to understand how usage of social media and preference of online interactions (compared to in-person) is associated with loneliness in teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHOD

Setting

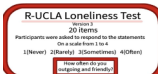
A survey on Google Forms was used to collect data. The survey was sent out over multiple social media platforms.

Participants

Teenagers aged 13-17 that use social media.

Measures

Usage for 5 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Discord)



*The Preference for Online Social Interaction (POSI) validated scale contains 3 domains to measure preference: frequency of usage, propensity compared to in-person interaction, superiority compared to in-person interaction

Data Analysis

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Pearson correlation test was used between POSI and R-UCLA Loneliness scores. ANOVA was used to compare the loneliness scores among participants with different levels of social media use frequencies for each platform. A summary social media usage score was created for each participant by averaging their frequencies from the 5 platforms. Pearson correlation test was used between these scores and R-UCLA Loneliness scores.

RESULT

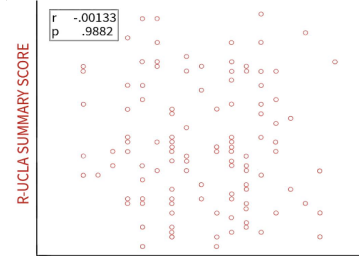
Survey Participants: total N=142; analyzed N=126

What is your age in years?	Frequency	Percent
13	24	19.1
14	16	12.7
15	27	21.4
16	48	38.1
17	11	8.7
Which option best describes your gender identity?		
Male	54	42.9
Female	54	50.8
Non-binary	5	4.0
Agender	2	0.8
Demigirl	1	1.6
Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?		
Yes	5	4.0
No	121	96.0
Please choose one to identify with:		
White/Caucasian	50	40
Asian	55	44
Multi-Racial	13	10.4
Black/African-American	2	1.6
American Indian/Native Alaskan	2	1.6

Differences in Loneliness Scores Between Users With Different Social Media Use Levels

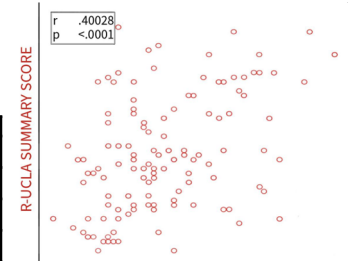
	1	2	3	4	5	F	P value
Facebook	41.9(12.3)	41.1(12.8)	49.9(13.5)	54.0(15.6)	N=0	1.54	0.208
Instagram	41.3(13.1)	43.9(12.1)	37.7(13.0)	42.6(10.5)	45.3(14.6)	1.08	0.368
Snapchat	44.0(13.0)	40.3(9.6)	40.0(10.8)	44.3(13.3)	41.0(12.9)	0.62	0.649
Tik Tok	42.8(12.2)	44.3(13.0)	36.9(13.4)	41.4(13.4)	44.5(12.3)	0.90	0.467
Discord	43.4(12.4)	38.9(12.4)	47.5(11.6)	40.3(13.4)	40.7(12.5)	1.17	0.327

Correlation Between Social Media Use Frequency and Loneliness Scores



AVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Correlation Between POSI Scores and Loneliness Scores



POSI SUMMARY SCORE

CONCLUSION

- No significant association between the average social media use variable and loneliness scores
- No significant difference between individual social media platform use and loneliness scores
- Significant association between POSI scores and loneliness scores

Limitations

- The study sample consisted of many Asian teens and participants were from the same urban area. Generalization is unclear.

Implications

- Preference of social media may be a more relevant predictor among adolescents compared to social media usage, and warrants further study.
- Further studies should be conducted on teens in terms of social media use and loneliness as the topic is constantly changing.
- Our findings are for participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. A follow-up survey after the pandemic may provide insightful information on the influence of the pandemic.

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