

Course: BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

Module: Independent Project (BMHP6020_LON)

Component 1: Element 1 - Project Proposal

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Plan

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Element 1 - Project Proposal

My project title:

Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among UK Adolescents: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis

Review Question

What are the lived experiences and beliefs of UK adolescents regarding the impact of social media use on their mental health and wellbeing?

1)Aims

To explore the lived experiences and perceptions of UK adolescents regarding the impact of social media use on their mental health and wellbeing through a qualitative meta-synthesis of existing research.

2) Objectives:

- 1.To Explore how UK adolescents experience and interpret the connection between social media use and anxiety or depression symptoms.
- 2.Identity key qualitative themes from research on adolescent social media use.
- 3.Provide recommendations to parents, educators, and practitioners for promoting healthy digital engagement.
- 4.To examine how social media cultural factors influence adolescents' views and experiences of social media's impact on their mental health.

1) Rationale:

Social media plays a central role in adolescents' lives, influencing their identities, relationships, and emotions. Evidence suggests excessive or negative use can contribute to anxiety, depression, and body image issues (Best et al., 2014). NHS Digital (2022) reports one in six children aged 5–16 in England likely have a mental health disorder, underscoring the need for understanding digital impacts. UK research shows social media both supports and challenges wellbeing, with risks including online comparison, cyberbullying, and sleep disruption, contrasted by benefits like social connection and self-expression (Orben and Przybylski, 2019). These complex and mixed findings require deeper qualitative analysis. This study aims to synthesize UK-based qualitative research to provide a nuanced understanding of factors shaping adolescents' digital experiences.

2) Methods:

A qualitative meta-synthesis will be conducted, reviewing peer-reviewed studies from the past ten years. Databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO, UWTSD Library/ProQuest, and British Education Index will be searched with keywords like 'social media', 'adolescents', 'mental health', and 'UK'. Inclusion criteria are qualitative studies of UK adolescents aged 13–18 exploring social media and mental wellbeing. Titles and abstracts will be screened, followed by full-text review. Methodological quality will be checked with a validated qualitative appraisal tool (e.g., CASP). Thematic synthesis (Thomas and Harden, 2008) will identify recurring patterns. Exclusion: Quantitative or mixed methods, non-English, outside age range, not focused on UK adolescents, conference abstracts, opinion pieces, and editorials.

5) Resources:

Access to academic databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, British Education Index) via UWTSD Library/ProQuest. Microsoft Word will be used for data extraction, analysis, and reporting.

6) *Timescale:*

	Time Scale				
	07.11.2025	07.12.2025	08.01.2026	10.02.2026	19.03.2026
Chapter: 1 Introduction					
Chapter: 2 Background					
Chapter: 3 Methods					
Chapter: 4 Discussion					
Chapter: 5 Recommendations, conclusion & Abstract					

7) Self-reflection as researcher (any strengths or challenges):

Strengths	Challenges
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Strong analytical skills and reflexivity help maintain objectivity when researching sensitive mental health topics	As a registered blind student, accessibility issues arise with visual materials and complex research papers.
I also have excellent time management skills, enabling me to efficiently balance research, analysis, and writing to meet deadlines consistently.	

References

Best, P., Manktelow, R., and Taylor, B. (2014) 'Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41, pp. 27–36. [Accessed 27 October 2025].

NHS Digital (2022) 'Mental health of children and young people in England, 2022'. Leeds: NHS Digital. [Accessed 27 October 2025].

Orben, A. And Przybylski, A.K. (2019) 'The association between adolescent well-being and digital technology use', *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3(2), pp. 173–182. [Accessed 27 October 2025].

Thomas, J. And Harden, A. (2008) 'Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews', *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8(1), p. 45. [Accessed 27 October 2025].

