

Course: BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

Module: Independent Project (BMHP6020_LON)

Component 1: Element 1 - Project Proposal

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Element 1 - Project Proposal

Project Title

Exploring the Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents Living in the United Kingdom.

1) Aim

The aim of this study is to explore how social media use influences the mental health and wellbeing of adolescents aged 13–18 living in the United Kingdom.

2) Objectives

- To examine patterns of social media use among adolescents in the UK.
- To identify key mental health outcomes associated with social media use, such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and emotional wellbeing.
- To analyse factors that may influence how social media affects adolescents' mental health, including frequency of use, type of platforms, and online interactions.
- To provide recommendations for improving digital wellbeing and supporting positive mental health among adolescents in the UK.

3) Background / Rationale

Social media has become an integral part of young people's daily lives. In the United Kingdom, the majority of adolescents regularly use platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube to communicate, share experiences, and access information. While these platforms can provide opportunities for connection, self-expression, and peer support, growing concerns have emerged regarding their potential effects on young people's mental health (Ng Fat, Cable and Kelly, 2021).

Recent studies suggest that excessive or problematic social media use may be associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and reduced self-esteem among adolescents (Singh and Manju, 2022). Adolescents may also experience cyberbullying, social comparison, and pressure to present idealised images of themselves online, which can negatively affect psychological wellbeing (Weigle and Shafi, 2024).

This study will review recent research in order to synthesise current evidence and identify how social media use may influence mental health outcomes among adolescents.

4) *Methods*

This research will adopt a secondary research design, using previously published academic studies to investigate the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health.

A systematic literature review will be conducted to identify, evaluate, and synthesise relevant peer-reviewed studies (Cheong et al., 2023).

Databases

Relevant literature will be searched using the following academic databases:

- UWTSD Library
- PubMed
- ProQuest
- Google Scholar

Keywords

The following search terms will be used:

- social media AND adolescent mental health UK

- social media use AND depression adolescents UK
- social media AND anxiety young people UK
- digital media AND wellbeing adolescents UK
- cyberbullying AND adolescent mental health UK

Boolean operators such as AND and OR will be used to refine the search strategy.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies will be included if they meet the following criteria:

- Primary research articles published in peer-reviewed journals.
- Studies published after 2016.
- Research focusing on adolescents aged approximately 13–18 years.
- Research conducted in the United Kingdom.
- Research examining the relationship between social media use and mental health outcomes.
- Articles written in English.

Exclusion Criteria

The following studies will be excluded:

- Literature reviews, books, policy reports, or non-peer-reviewed publications.
- Studies published before 2016.
- Research conducted outside the UK.
- Studies focusing primarily on adults or children under 13 years old.
- Articles not written in English.

Data analysis: Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

5) Resources

The following resources will support this research:

- Access to UWTSD Library resources
- Guidance and feedback from the module lecturer
- Support from library services for literature searching

6) *Timescale:*

Type of work:	20/03/2026	10/04/2026	15/06/2026	15/07/2026	15/08/2026
Chapter:1 introduction					
Chapter 2: background					
Chapter 3: methods					
Chapter 4: Findings					
Chapter :5 recommendations and conclusions -					

7) Self-Reflection as a Researcher

Strengths	Challenges
Strong interest in adolescent mental health	Managing time alongside other academic responsibilities
Motivation to complete my work	Balancing research with work and children commitments
Familiarity with academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and ProQuest	Limited experience with research

References

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021) *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage
- Cheong, H. et al. (2023) 'Secondary Qualitative Research Methodology Using Online Data within the Context of Social Sciences', *International journal of qualitative methods*, 22. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231180160>.
- Ng Fat, L., Cable, N. and Kelly, Y. (2021) 'Associations between social media usage and alcohol use among youths and young adults: findings from Understanding Society', *Addiction* (Abingdon, England), 116(11), pp. 2995–3005. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.15482>.
- Singh, J. and Manju (2022) 'Assessment on Impact of Social-Media on Teenagers', in 2022 *IEEE Delhi Section Conference* (DELCON). IEEE, pp. 1–6. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1109/DELCON54057.2022.9753604>.
- Weigle, P.E. and Shafi, R.M.A. (2024) 'Social Media and Youth Mental Health', *Current psychiatry reports*, 26(1), pp. 1–8. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-023-01478-w>.