


Social media and quality of life – For good or for bad?

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ABSTRACT

The internet emerged in Brazil in the early 90's, in states such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, first with access only to Universities and for research purposes and soon after with home access networks and mobile networks that went viral in all sectors and became an instrument of communication and information in all age groups. Whether it's for meeting and meeting people, as well as for shopping, traveling, research, among

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others. Along with the internet came the social media Orkut, Facebook, Whats App, Twitter (X), Instagram, LinkedIn, and now the Tik Tok, where everyone can post any kind of opinions that in some cases can have a harmful characteristic. Social media has been used to look for jobs, to shop, to study, to date, to research, and many other functions. On any subject, the internet offers a multitude of sites of everything you want to know, just type and wait for the results. However, what has been observed in recent years is the increase in access to websites directed to information, as well as the increase in people who use this tool, in order to know a little more about various subjects, This study aims to describe, through a narrative bibliographic review, describe the role of social media and its influence on the quality of life in society.

Keywords: Social Media, Sources of Information, Quality of Life.



INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, internet access to the general public was still made available to the general public in a very timid way, with the action of the Federal Government (through the Ministry of Communication and the Ministry of Science and Technology) in an attempt to implement the necessary infrastructure and define parameters for the subsequent operation of private companies providing access to users. Since then, internet access in our country has experienced a tremendous growth. According to the IBGE, in 2013, 7.2 million Brazilians accessed the internet through a tablet or cell phone, and even at that time the computer was still responsible for the largest number of accesses (IBGE, 2018; DIZARD, 2000; BRAZIL, 2014).

The Internet, or global information system, is formed by a worldwide network of interconnected computers, represents today the largest repository of information known in the world, and is available to any individual who accesses the network anywhere (DIZARD, 2000; BRAZIL, 2015). The arrival of this technology has brought countless facilities to people's daily lives, as well as contributed immensely to the advancement of science, sales, socialization, administrative processes, leisure, communication and knowledge. Developed countries have been investing more and more in the area of technoscience (FOX, 2004).

In this way, how the internet has been contributing with information related to various areas of knowledge, studies (XAVIER, 2013; PAIVA 2013) report that it could influence lifestyle, as well as early detection of health problems and disease, or even cause a disease when misused. However, we must not forget that the Internet and more recently the Social Media Boom can have their positive side, as long as health promotion strategies can be disseminated through this means of communication in order to promote quality of life. The objective of this study is to describe, through the narrative literature review, the role of social media as a source of information and quality of life today.

METHODOLOGY

This is a narrative literature review study, where studies define narrative as a way of understanding experience in a process of exchange between researcher and researched. Narrative research can be described as a methodology that consists of collecting stories about a certain topic, where the researcher will find information to understand a certain phenomenon. In this study, we sought references on the theme Social Media and its relationship with Quality of Life, in the SciELO and PubMed databases. We chose to use the narrative literature review due to the scarcity of studies related to the theme, as well as its relevance today. Only 12 articles were found in PubMed, and 3 in Scielo on the subject using the descriptors Social Media and Quality of Life. For this study, the inclusion criterion "Social Media and Quality of Life" was determined in a composite manner.



RESULTS

It is necessary to understand that information technology and the increasingly constant use of the internet have been significantly changing the way people interact with each other, and this involves communication, relationships and connection with the world. However, the use of this technology, depending on the user, may represent in some cases a barrier to be overcome if the life history, education, culture, language, health, among other aspects, which will influence the use of this technology, are considered. (XAVIER, 2013; PAIVA, 2013).

With the advent of instant messaging-related applications, there is a greater interest in individuals using the Internet, including elderly people who some time ago had no interest in the Internet, whether for communication with a distant loved one, or for communication with friends or even the formation of chat groups (MIRANDA, 2009; IBGE, 2020; BRAZIL, 2017).

The transition from analog to digital technology represented a significant rupture for individuals in the various life cycles, who became accustomed to living with technologies of a different order, different from radio and TV. The use of instruments of the digital age represents a new learning, which does not allow the use of previous knowledge to build this skill, and in this way, lead to a positive impact on the cognitive exercise carried out in the attempt to discover this tool (BAUDIN et al 2020; PAIVA, 2013; MARTERS, 2008).

According to 2022 PNAD data, the number of Brazilians who accessed the internet was 161 million. The number of people aged 10 and over who accessed the internet in 2022 in Brazil jumped to 161.6 million. This represents 87.2% of the national population, compared to the 84.7% recorded in 2021. When the data relate to the elderly over 60 years of age or older who use the Internet, it rose from 24.7% in 2016 to 62.1% in 2022 (IBGE, 2024).

Also according to the PNAD – National Household Sample Survey – (IBGE, 2024), with regard to private school students, they represent 98.4% of users against 89.4% of public school students who used the Internet in 2022. Also according to the report, the most used equipment to access the Internet in 2022 was the mobile phone (98.9%), although with a considerable difference, followed by TV (47.5%) (IBGE, 2024).

The number of individuals, according to these studies, who accessed the internet via microcomputer decreased from 63.2% in 2016 to 35.5% in 2022. Access to the internet through tablets also fell from 16.4% to 7.6% in this period. The Continuous PNAD program also investigated, for the first time in 2022, the frequency with which people used the Internet: 93.4% used it every day, 94.4% of users accessed the internet to talk by voice or video calls. Also according to the IBGE, (2024). Other purposes reported were: sending or receiving text, voice or image messages through applications other than e-mail (92.0%); watching videos, including programs, series and movies (88.3%) and using social networks (83.6%) (IBGE, 2024).



According to PNAD data, adolescents spend more and more time online and connected to each other through digital technologies, as well as being the ones who use social media the most. Mobile device ownership and social media use have reached unprecedented levels, and concerns have arisen that this constant connectivity may harm the mental health of users in general, especially adolescents who are still in the process of cognitive impairment (ANDREASSEN, 2016).

There is widespread speculation that the rise in depression and anxiety is being driven by changes in the way teens interact with each other through social media and time online. The claims are that teens are increasingly missing out on opportunities to socialize and are more likely to be harassed and victimized online by being under constant attack from idealized people and at the mercy of carefully curated images that can lead to upward social comparisons, envy, and in turn, lower well-being and increased rates of depression. studies demonstrate inconsistent and mostly small associations between the amount of digital technology use and mental health, without any way of discerning the cause of the effect (APPEL and CRUZIUS, 2016; ARND-CADDIGAN et al, 2017; TWENGE, Jean M. et al., 2018).

In developed countries such as the United States, when it comes to Internet user profiles, it is observed that more and more people are using the internet as a source of information and guidance, for flirting, to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, to understand health problems or related to the promotion of health and well-being (ZICHUHR, 2012).

According to the WHO (World Health Organization), Quality of Life is defined as the perception that an individual has of his or her life, in the context of the culture and value systems in which he or she lives and in relation to his or her goals, expectations, standards and concerns. However, the Internet and Social Media fit the pattern of perception and culture of modern society. (WHO, 2024; OLIVEIRA, 2020).

However, despite the role of the internet today and its importance in this globalized world, as a source of information and connection between individuals, it is possible to observe a multitude of sites with harmful content to users, where the phrase "Internet lawless land" is used. In Brazil, the journey to control this content is beginning, but it is believed that Social Media offers outdated or even misleading information on various topics considering current scientific knowledge (MOURA, 2021; Center for the Digital Future The World Internet Project, 2016; MARTESR, 2008).

Due to the reach of the internet to the most varied groups, it has been used in the recruitment of participants in scientific studies, due to the wide reach of the network, as well as the growing use of social media by the general population. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter(X) and Google+, Instagram and Tik-Tok provide access to the most diverse populations of readers who make use of the social network (BENDER, 2017; MOURA, 2021).



There is widespread speculation that the rise in depression and anxiety is being driven by changes in the way teens interact with each other through social media and time online. The claims are that teenagers are increasingly missing out on opportunities for face-to-face interaction (Arnd-Caddigan, 2017), are likely to be harassed and victimised often online, and are under constant attack from idealised people and carefully crafted images, for a reality that often does not exist.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In the field of research, the use of social networks offers benefits such as identification of risk conditions, dissemination, information and promotion of positive changes in behavior. However, ethical considerations regarding the use of social networks for vulnerable individuals such as children and adolescents who, according to what is presented in this study, are mostly Internet users, the digital world can bring with it rapid and unprecedented changes in the way individuals spend time, connect to the world, and communicate with each other. Mobile ownership and social media use have reached unprecedented levels among today's society, even in the most remote places. Perhaps this is not surprising, as digital devices and the possibilities they provide are especially strong attractions for young people, given their high need for affiliation, social approval and novelty seeking. As individuals spend a large part of their time using social media, there is an urgent need to understand the effects of this use and to harness new technologies in ways that support without harming mental health and wellbeing. Social Media could be an instrument to promote quality of life, however the scarcity of studies on the subject and the lack of control over the contents found is still a barrier to be broken, so that we can understand its role in our society, benign or malignant.



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