

Dietary Satisfaction in Adolescents in an Era of Social Media Addiction



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CMST 213 Communication in Social Media

June 12, 2022

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This study is conducted to find the relation between adolescents' dietary satisfaction and their social media usage. Dietary satisfaction pertains to a person's satisfaction with the quantity and quality of food being consumed, as well as the planning and preparation of meals, and the acceptability of one's eating habits and behaviors (Harry, & Kwangsoo, 2022). Dietary satisfaction looks different for everyone, whether they have a goal, such as trying to lose weight, gain weight, stay the same weight, help a chronic disease, etc. whereas, some people don't think about the food they consume. With this study, we are going to look at the correlation between respondents' social media usage and their dietary satisfaction. On social media people are exposed to many different things, a lot of people are exposed to advertisements such as, "Fast Belly Fat Removal", "Easy Ways to Lose Weight", "Weight loss Diets", etc., from a young age. It is proven that when people are exposed to certain things such as different foods at a young age they get into habits and express interest in those different foods and learn to try new foods (Humpherys, 2016), the same can go with these advertisements, young people getting these advertisements about dieting and body image can make someone want to diet or look different, changing the way they view themselves and their comfort with food. Looking from a different perspective, social media can also help people eat healthier and live a healthier lifestyle because there are also many influencers that show how they live their healthy lifestyles while still enjoying what they eat (Goodyear, Boardley, Chiou, Fenton, Makopoulou, & Stathi, 2021). There is also a third perspective to look at, some adolescents do not care what they are eating and would rather eat many snacks throughout the day and be on social media rather

than take time off of social media and make a meal, because that takes more time. With that comes the question of, how does social media use affect adolescents' dietary satisfaction?

Method

An online survey was conducted for this research and sent out via canvas discussion board and email, optional to take for classmates. The survey was also put on a Snapchat story for more data to be collected, the survey was again optional and anonymous. There were 23 respondents, categorized by age and gender identity. 70% of recipients are 15-18 years old, 17% are 19-20 years old, and 13% are 21 years and up. 65% identified as female, 17% identified as male, 13% identified as non-binary or other, and 4% preferred to say.

The questions in the survey asked about the participants' social media usage, from what platforms they use most often, what habits they are in (use social media to procrastinate vs. having set times), feelings they have about food brought to them by social media, and if they meal prep and weekly to everyday food intake.

Results

The results were mixed among the different people that took them. Taking a look at peoples' social media usage, 0% use social media for less than an hour a day, 26% use social media between 1 and 2 hours, 30% use social media between 3-4 hours, 22% use social media between 5-6 hours, and 22% use social media for over 6 hours a day.

Blue	Less than 1 hour	0 (0%)
Orange	1-2 hours	6 (26%)
Green	3-4 hours	7 (30%)
Red	5-6 hours	5 (22%)
Purple	More than 6 hours	5 (22%)



One of the questions on the survey asked participants, “Has social media ever made you feel like dieting?” 52% of participants responded yes, while 43% responded no, and 4% said it was not applicable to them. 75% of the respondents that responded yes, were female, 8.33% male, and 16.66% other. 55.5% of the 75% of females that responded yes to dieting are between the ages of 15 and 18 years old.

Blue	Yes	12 (52%)
Orange	No	10 (43%)
Green	N/A	1 (4%)



On the other hand, another question asked participants, “Has social media ever made you feel like eating “cleaner”?” 65% answered yes, and 35% answered no.

Blue	Yes	15 (65%)
Orange	No	8 (35%)



The following question asks if social media has actually helped improve their eating habits and 65% answered no, while 35% answered yes.

Blue	Yes	8 (35%)
Orange	No	15 (65%)



Another question asked if participants did meal preparations. 4% saying yes, 13% answering occasionally, and 83% responding no.

Blue	Yes	1 (4%)
Orange	No	19 (83%)
Green	Occasionally	3 (13%)



Discussion

Based on these findings it can not be said that there is only a negative effect on social media and its relation to dietary satisfaction in adolescents because there were several people that said that social media has helped them improve their eating habits, whatever that may look like specifically for them. But looking at the statistics a greater percentage of people have not had that experience, but instead, social media has made them feel like they have to diet, many of those individuals being female. Another important thing to look at was the answers to the questions, “Has social media ever made you feel like eating ‘cleaner’?” And “Has social media ever actually helped improve your eating habits (whatever that looks like for you personally)?” The

percentages of people from yes to no switched. With the question of feeling like eating cleaner, the results were 65% yes and 35% no, but in the question asking if they followed through, only 35% answered yes and 65% answered no. Some questions that needed to be asked include, Have you ever had ads about dieting or losing weight pop up while using social media?, Are you comfortable with food and calorie intake?. In future research, dietary satisfaction questions need to be kept separate from body image questions. The question about dieting, although important, could've been made more clear because it could be interpreted as a question asking about body image as opposed to caloric intake or comfort and satisfaction around food. In this research, although still left pretty open-ended, it was found that dietary satisfaction differs from person to person and can be positively or negatively affected by adolescents' social media use.

References

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