

# From the psychological perspective: to explore the impact of the use of life-sharing social media on the anxiety of young people

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**Abstract:** As social media platforms become increasingly dominant in daily life, their impact on mental health is increasingly attracting attention. These platforms often highlight the idealized life, and the use of these platforms will encourage the psychology of social comparison, thus leading to increased anxiety symptoms, and young people are vulnerable to the pressure to maintain an idealized image online. In addition, social media can create virtual relationships that lack emotional depth and thus encourage loneliness. This paper argues that we need to further recognize the psychological harm resulting from social media use and guide the healthier use of these platforms by youth groups.

**Keywords:** psychology; life sharing, social media; youth group; anxiety psychology

In recent years, the widespread use of social media platforms, such as TikTok, has dramatically changed the way individuals interact with others. These platforms allow users to share all aspects of their daily lives, creating a network culture centered on visibility. People often compare their lives with those of others, creating a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt, this phenomenon that is particularly worrying among young people, as their sense of identity is still developing.

## 1. The concept of the psychological impact of life-sharing social media use on the anxiety of youth groups

Social media to share lifestyle is a platform where individuals post personal life content, including photos, videos, and status updates that often highlight achievements, experiences, or daily activities. For adolescents, these platforms are both a source of contact and stress. In this

context, anxiety is associated with emotional discomfort caused by stress to maintain an idealized network image <sup>[1]</sup>. With constant exposure to these online content, young people increase social rejection and fear of being judged, all of which increase anxiety. Thus, the use of shared lifestyle social media can exacerbate adolescent mental health challenges.

## 2. Characteristics of the impact of life-sharing social media use on the psychological anxiety of youth groups

### 2.1 Excessive self-examination

Using social media that share a lifestyle often leads to excessive self-examination among young people. Social media platforms encourage individuals to post carefully curated images of their lives, creating a sense of stress that forces them to constantly display their idealized selves. For young people, this stress can lead to constant

self-evaluation. They will focus too much on their appearance, actions and actions, trying to reach influential people. This constant reflection on how others perceive themselves will lead to increased self-awareness, and when the reality is inconsistent with the idealized image on social media, they will have a sense of inadequacy [2]. Over time, this weakens self-esteem because individuals feel they are not living up to expectations, even if they are unrealistic. On social media, youth groups planning their own lives encourages a cycle of self-censorship, and they feel forced to compare their real lives with the lives of others, which often leads to dissatisfaction. This comparison is not limited to surface features such as appearance, but also extends to success, interpersonal relationships and so on. As they scroll through messages filled with career achievements, young users begin to carefully examine their achievements, believing that their achievements and personal lives are less meaningful than that. The more time you spend on social media, the more likely it is to fall into a cycle of overthinking, leading to negative mental health consequences such as depression.

## 2.2 Social pressure

Social media to share lifestyle has greatly increased the social pressure on young people. These platforms are designed to show the best aspects of people's lives, often as idealizations of real life. When youth interact with these platforms, they often see images of peers who seem to have perfect relationships, fueling a natural tendency to compare themselves with others. For many teen users, these comparisons lead to a feeling of jealousy because they perceive deficiencies in personal achievement, appearance, etc. Furthermore, constant exposure to these social comparisons promotes an

unhealthy cycle in which adolescents not only compare themselves to others but also internalize these comparisons as a reflection of their own self-worth, which can lead to negative self-talk. When teenagers feel that their real life is inconsistent with the online role they see, this exacerbates the anxiety generated by the need to show an idealized self [3]. This sense of “misfit” leads to a fear of social exclusion, making likes, comments and sharing a measure of self-recognition. Over time, this social comparison stress leads to feelings of social anxiety as young people worry about how they are perceived online and offline, leading to further emotional distress.

## 2.3 The pursuit of a perfect image

The constant emergence of idealized content on social media platforms drives young people to look for perfection, often depicting orchestrated versions of life where individuals share their best moments and hide their imperfections. This selective sharing creates an unrealistic standard that encourages young people to emulate these idealized images of beauty. In many cases, young users will internalize these images and feel the pressure to match these standards in their own lives. The pursuit of perfection is not only to impress others, but also a way to gain social recognition. Thus, adolescents are forced to present themselves in unreal ways, often exaggerating all aspects of their lives to fit the “perfect” image they think others expect. On social media, teenagers unremitting pursuit of perfect image can lead to serious psychological distress, because they will try to reconcile the real life imperfect and the contradiction between the perfect image, this conflict will encourage self-doubt, because they will constantly evaluate their life is in line with the ideal described on

social media. They are judged fearing that their lives fall meet these expectations, a fear that leaves them paralyzed and leads to elevated stress levels [4]. Moreover, this commitment to perfection leads to a reduced sense of self-worth, as adolescents place their value on external performance rather than intrinsic quality. The stress of maintaining this perfect image over time leads to anxiety, as they become increasingly dissatisfied with their true self compared to the perfect image on social media.

#### 2.4 Virtual sense of network relationship

Sharing a lifestyle in social media tends to create a sense of a virtual relationship, which can greatly affect the mental health of young people. These platforms allow users to connect with others through likes and comments, providing the illusion of social interaction. However, these virtual connections often lack the depth of face-to-face relationships. Although young people have a large number of online friends, they will still feel isolated in real life. This occurs because interactions on social media tend to be superficial and focus on brief communications rather than meaningful conversations. Thus, adolescents experience loneliness because their online relationships fail to bring them emotional satisfaction as much as real interpersonal relationships do. Despite the frequent online communication, the lack of true emotional intimacy can make teenagers feel emotionally estranged from others, thus exacerbating anxiety. In addition, the virtuality of network relationships can also lead to misunderstanding. Social media often encourages people to present idealized lives, leading people to interact through perfect rather than real perspectives, which creates a disconnect between the way individuals present themselves online and the way they interact in

front of people. For teenagers, this can cause confusion about their true selves. The pressure of maintaining an idealized online image makes teenagers anxious because they feel they need to constantly manage themselves in virtual relationships to maintain their image. Over time, this disconnect between virtual and real-world interactions leads to social anxiety, as adolescents feel their deficiencies are misunderstood in face-to-face social situations, and this virtual relationship dynamics can cause distortion of social connection, amplifying loneliness and further aggravating mental health problems.

### 3 Analysis of the psychological impact of the use of life-sharing social media on the anxiety of young people

#### 3.1 Increase social comparative pressure

The use of lifestyle-sharing social media platforms increases social comparison pressures on young people that typically highly modify individual lives to present achievements in a modified way. When young people are exposed to this content, they naturally compare their lives with seemingly perfect experiences shared by others, a process that is normal for human behavior, but social media intensifies this process by exposing young users to a steady stream of "success" stories. For many young people, these comparisons can lead to dissatisfaction because they think their lives are not exciting enough to compare with them. The fear of missing becomes common and teens feel they lag behind in personal development, leading to increased stress. In addition, the pressure to "compete" with others on social media can also lead to a distorted sense of self-worth. When young people internalize these comparisons, their self-esteem is increasingly associated with external recognition, such as

likes, comments, and fans. This reliance on social recognition can further increase anxiety, as adolescents will feel the need to continuously improve some aspects of their lives in order to gain recognition. Over time, this comparison leads to long-term dissatisfaction, as it is impossible to consistently match the idealized life presented online. Anxiety about social comparison occurs in various ways, ranging from declining self-confidence to increasing social anxiety, as adolescents worry that their shortcomings will be judged.

### 3.2 Cause self-doubt

The use of social media that share lifestyles tends to provoke self-doubt among young people due to constant exposure to idealized life descriptions of others. When teenagers browse their information sources, they see their friends and peers living seemingly perfect lives, and these comparisons make young people question their abilities. For many people, seeing someone else's achievement makes them wonder if their achievement meets the mark. On social media, the pressure to show a perfect oneself exacerbates this self-doubt, as young people begin to believe that nothing imperfect will be accepted. Worried about not being good enough, or not meeting the expectations of their peers, this can be a persistent source of anxiety. Moreover, the curated nature of social media content distorts reality, making it difficult for young people to distinguish between truly successful and idealized images. When they fail to meet these unrealistic standards, self-doubt intensifies, leading to a cycle of negative self-reflection. This internalization of self-confidence and lead teenagers to question their self-worth. When they constantly measure themselves with others, it is difficult for them to recognize their unique strengths and develop

deep insecurity. The longer social media exposure, the greater the impact of these self-doubt thoughts, leading to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

### 3.3 Amplify anxiety symptoms

Sharing a lifestyle in social media can greatly exacerbates anxiety among young people, and these platforms often create an environment of constant exposure to idealized reality, where others seem to live a perfect life. For young people, the constant emergence of "perfect" posts aggravates their insecurity. Such exposure can encourage fear of missing out and increase social comparison, thus increasing concerns about ineligibility. The more they exposed to these platforms, the greater the anxiety, as they begin to internalize stress to achieve these idealized images. For example, when young people feel that they are inferior to their peers, or do not achieve the image of others, their anxiety symptoms will worsen, and this constant comparison will create a cycle of emotional distress, further aggravating the sense of social isolation. In addition, exposure to social media often leads to increased vigilance about how others perceive themselves. Teens will focus on their online image and become obsessed with checking other people's likes, comments, or other forms of approval. This constant seeking recognition can disrupt their emotional balance and make them anxious about their self-worth. Furthermore, rapidly updated information on social media can cause information overload and increase stress and anxiety. Teenagers will find it difficult to cut off from the outside world, which causes them to be overwhelmed by a lot of content, thus increasing mental stress. Over time, this onset of anxiety symptoms leads to more serious mental health problems, such as chronic anxiety disorders, as young people need to keep

up with social media trends.

### 3.4 Weaken the sense of self-identity

Social media platforms that share lifestyles can greatly undermine young people's self-identity. These platforms often encourage users to present their elaborate lives, focusing on alignment with social ideals such as success and happiness. When adolescents are exposed to these platforms, they will feel forced to adjust their personal identity to these social expectations, thus leading them to prioritize external validation over authentic self-expression. This shift in developing an idealized image online causes them to break away from their true selves as they begin to see their value from the perspective of likes, comments and fans. The more time it takes to align their online image with what people see as ideal, the further away they are from their true identity, eventually leading to confusion about their true identity. Moreover, this identity crisis can be exacerbated by the constant emergence of idealized content on social media, as it demonstrates a narrow definition of success. When teenagers compare their lives to those who seem to "have everything," they begin to feel that their identity, experiences, and aspirations are inadequate, eroding their confidence in their unique qualities. The pressure to meet the standards set by others online makes young people feel confused, as they try to reconcile the relationship between real life and the screened content. Over time, this leads to a deep sense of alienation, because young people feel themselves with their true values, and the result is a diminished sense of self-identity, and teenagers feel anxious about their place in the world and their ability to truly express themselves<sup>[5]</sup>.

### 3.5 Create loneliness

Social media that share lifestyle can increase loneliness among young people. While these platforms are designed to link users together, they often create a superficial sense of false connection. On social media, young people often see carefully orchestrated images that evoke a sense of rejection. This increases loneliness when teenagers see others participating in activities they do not. Although they are "connected" with others online, they will in real life feel disconnected from others, because the interactions on these platforms often lack the intimacy that real-world relationships provide. Moreover, the conceptuality of relationships on social media exacerbates loneliness, as interactions often lack emotional depth and fail to provide the same level of satisfaction as interpersonal interactions. Young people have many online friends, but these virtual relationships make them feel superficial and create emptiness. When users spend more time focusing on their online roles, they ignore the true face-to-face connection that contributes to the health of the emotions. This perception of virtual relationships makes teens feel more isolated over time because they have difficulty in establishing meaningful real-world connections. As they are more exposed to social media, constantly seeing the "perfect" lives of others makes them feel less social, thus deepening their loneliness.

## 4. Epilogue

In short, social media that share lifestyle has a profound impact on young people. While these platforms provide a sense of connection, they tend to intensify social comparisons, all of which amplify anxiety symptoms. The planned nature of social media content creates unrealistic standards, leading to feelings of inadequacy and

loneliness. While social media provides adolescents use these platforms, they must opportunities for social interaction, it tends to recognize the psychological harm they cause and foster shallow relationships that lack emotional depth and further aggravate loneliness. When encourage them to adopt healthier internet access strategies.

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