Research topic: The Impact of Fake News Via Social Media on Student Mental Health

Part 1: Using ChatGPT

Research question

How does exposure to fake news on social media platforms affect the mental health and well-being of university students?

ChatGPT Responses

I presented the research question to ChatGPT and requested the system to give me one source of information in a book, one scholarly journal article, and one trustworthy internet source. The responses obtained are shown below:

Book Source:

LaGarde, J., & Hudgins, D. (2018). *Fact vs. fiction: Teaching critical thinking skills in the age of fake news*. International Society for Technology in Education.

ChatGPT has clarified that this book discusses the effects of excessive use of digital technology and social media on Generation Z. It highlights an increase in rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness in the youth directly related to the rates of screen time and socialization on the internet.

Peer Reviewed Journal Source:

Naeem, S. B., Bhatti, R., & Khan, A. (2021). An exploration of how fake news is taking over social media and putting public health at risk. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, *38*(2), 143-149.

ChatGPT reported that this overview discovered considerable relationships between the frequency of social media utilization and the likelihood of elevated levels of depression and anxiety among adolescents and students. It also stated the effect of negative experiences on

worsening mental health outcomes, e.g. cyberbullying, fear of missing out (FOMO), and exposure to unrealistic comparisons.

Credible Internet Source:

Mayo Clinic Staff. (2022). The use of social media: How do you think it affects your mental health? Mayo Clinic. Accessed through the site of Mayoclinic.org.

ChatGPT emphasized that the Mayo Clinic offers an equalized perspective of the dangers and the possible advantages of using social media. Though it acknowledges social media could strengthen the bonds and decrease isolation, overuse occurs with sleep difficulties, high stress, low self-worth, and aggravating symptoms of depression and anxiety.

ChatGPT Responses Evaluation

The data produced by ChatGPT was pertinent and useful to provide an overview of the topic within a short period. Twenge (2017) offers a well-known and popular source of literature on changes in generations, but the book is already a bit dated (8 years old) due to the rather fast development of social media platforms. The systematic review published in the journal by Keles et al. (2020) was a peer-reviewed article, which is a strong and credible academic source, but more recent studies (20212024) can be used to obtain more recent information. The article of the Mayo Clinic (2022) was a reliable source of information on the internet, and the authors are the medical professionals who write it on the basis of a reputable institutional site.

The journal article was the most analytical with regard to quality and the Mayo Clinic article was practical and easy to understand by an ordinary reader. In sum, the answers were very accurate and comprehensive, but additional peer-reviewed research in the recent past would enhance the research rigor.

Consideration of ChatGPT Research

The ChatGPT tool was quick, effective, and useful in locating quality sources of information in various categories (book, peer-reviewed journal, and internet). The fact that it generated both relevant and reliable sources was an impressive fact that gave me a good starting point in my research. However, I realized that the material in some of the sources was a bit outdated, especially the book source that was published in 2017. Another issue is that ChatGPT does not necessarily give the text or direct access to the material, and it requires additional validation. However, ChatGPT can be useful even in terms of a rapid search of information, particularly, brainstorming and finding it within a few minutes. I would apply it in the initial stages of research to get the orientation, however, I would apply the manual research in more in-depth and critical involvements with the subject matter.

Part 2: Manual research

Research question

How does exposure to fake news on social media platforms affect the mental health and well-being of university students?

Book Source:

Shu, K., & Liu, H. (2022). *Detecting fake news on social media*. Springer Nature. Detecting Fake News on Social Media - Kai Shu, Huan Liu - Google Books

This book explores the psychological aspects of using social media. This book shows how constant connectivity fosters comparison and unrealistic self-expectations, that can lead anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem. Fake news of social media makes pressure on people to present their lives perfect to others. This book provides practical strategies such as mindful engagement, digital detox, and establishment of healthier online boundaries. These may help students to handle their digital stress.

Peer Reviewed Journal Source:

Rocha, Y. M., De Moura, G. A., Desidério, G. A., De Oliveira, C. H., Lourenço, F. D., & de Figueiredo Nicolete, L. D. (2023). The impact of fake news on social media and its influence on health during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review. *Journal of Public Health*, *31*(7), 1007-1016. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01658-z

This article evaluates the opportunities and risks of social media. As news of the new coronavirus disease spread, people started to feel nervous. Fake news has taken over social media and is now a common occurrence for many people. Thus, the purpose of this study was to use a systematic review to assess how social media affected the spread of information about the infodemic and its impacts on health. This article shows that highly use of social media may

increase the level of anxiety, depression, and sleep disruption. However, if people use social media wisely or moderately, then it helps adolescents to build social connections.

Credible Internet Source:

American Psychological Association (APA). (2023). *Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence*. Retrieved from: Health advisory on social media use in adolescence

Researchers in psychology look at the possible benefits and drawbacks of social media use on teenagers' social, scholastic, psychological, and neurological development. The many stakeholders that share responsibility for preserving the health of adolescents (children, parents, guardians, educators, legislators, practitioners, and those in the tech industry) are impacted by this quickly expanding and evolving field of study.

Evaluation:

Manual research developed current data and critical analysis compared to ChatGPT. Manual research also provides better, more comprehensive findings compared to ChatGPT. The sources between 2020 and 2023 were highly relevant that reflected current debates and latest statistical information. Unlike ChatGPT, manual research is able for direct access to original sources. These help readers to access its methodology, sample size, and reliability. These help readers to understand the relationship between social media and student mental health.

Reflection

By conducting manual research, I feel a deeper appreciation of academic rigor. Manual research allows me to access critically and compare different perspectives. The sources that I collected from current sources (2020 - 2023) which are applicable directly to my research question. It is true that this process is time- consuming, but it also provides accurate data, verifiable aspects, and credible academically. Manual research also helps me to recognize the

complexity of the issue (such as cultural variations and the importance of context). Furthermore, I feel that manual research is reliable and depth of understanding based on critical involvements along with the subject matter.

Part 3: Comparison

Comparison of ChatGPT and Manual Research

The ChatGPT and manual study provided valuable information on the effects of social media on the mental health of students, although they are dissimilar in terms of speed, deepness, and credibility. ChatGPT responded with a summary of the sources and was useful in brainstorming or preliminary research in less than a minute. Nevertheless, the references were not necessarily the latest ones, and the platform cannot give one the opportunity to critically evaluate the original writings.

Manual research on the other hand was more effortful although it yielded more detailed, better and more current data. To demonstrate, the APA (2023) instructions and meta-analysis conducted by Shu & Liu, (2022) offered more detailed and complete results compared to the ChatGPT-related suggestions. This shows that academic writing requires manual research, and ChatGPT may be an efficient supplement to it.

Key Discussion Questions

What are the situations when ChatGPT can be helpful to gather the information?

ChatGPT can be applied at the initial phases of the research when one needs to brainstorm, develop keywords, or get an overview of credible resources. It is good and saves time as well as offers an organized start point.

What are the shortcomings of only using ChatGPT to conduct research?

Its disadvantages are the age of the sources, the impossibility to have access to the whole texts, and the inability to be critical about the methodology or situation of a study. Using ChatGPT as a single source may lead to an oversimplified and weak academic theory.

Why is hand research useful in academia and the work place?

Manual research guarantees academic rigor because of the possibility to use peer-reviewed, current, and verifiable materials. It also enables researchers to compare methodology, relevancy and credibility which reinforces critical thinking and academic integrity.

Conclusion

The current assignment demonstrated how ChatGPT and manual research complement each other in the academic investigation process. ChatGPT is useful in terms of efficiency, brainstorming, and general knowledge, however, it fails to match the richness, accuracy, and subtleties of manual research. Manual research is a necessity in both academic and professional settings since it is the way to guarantee the credibility and rigor of argument development. In the end, a combination of both instruments is probably the most effective method: ChatGPT as the prelude and manual research as the basis of serious academics.

Reference

American Psychological Association (APA). (2023). *Health Advisory on Social Media Use in Adolescence*. Retrieved from: Health advisory on social media use in adolescence

Chatgbt, (2025). *Chatgbt.* Retrieved from: https://chatgpt.com/

Rocha, Y. M., De Moura, G. A., Desidério, G. A., De Oliveira, C. H., Lourenço, F. D., & de Figueiredo Nicolete, L. D. (2023). The impact of fake news on social media and its influence on health during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review. *Journal of Public Health*, *31*(7), 1007-1016. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-021-01658-z

Shu, K., & Liu, H. (2022). *Detecting fake news on social media*. Springer Nature. Detecting Fake News on Social Media - Kai Shu, Huan Liu - Google Books