Social Media and Social Anxiety: How Does Social Media Presence Correlate with the Exhibition of Anxiety Characteristics?

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This research investigates the correlations between social media presence and social anxiety. The ideal outcome of this research is to be able to identify whether social media usage is a direct trigger to presentation of social anxiety characteristics, or if there are other correlations between the two. Hopefully, the data acquired from this study will be able to be utilized in altering social media usage to facilitate coping with and lessening symptoms of anxiety. Each subject completed the Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) and submitted her score, as well as her top-contributing factor. This highlighted the level at which the subject experienced social anxiety. Secondarily, the subjects submitted four social media values- average length of Snapchat streak, number of Snapchat streaks, number of followers on Instagram, and average likes on last 5 Instagram posts. These four social media values were compiled into a composite numerical Social Media Presence Measure (SMPM). During data analysis, subjects who tested positively for clinical social anxiety were isolated from the population. These subjects' average SMPM values were 41% greater than the remaining population lacking clinical social anxiety. This illustrates a positive correlation between social media presence and Social Phobia Inventory scores; however, the elevated SPIN score is a given that must occur first for the subject to have a similarly elevated SMPM value. This supports the conclusion that social media is a trigger for social anxiety symptoms in individuals who are already afflicted by the disorder.

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