Is social media doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people.

Zoe Kate Aylward
1800431

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Declaration Form

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Abstract

The study set out to evaluate if social media is doing young people any good, looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people. The objectives of the study were to produce a in-depth literature review which critically analysed 5 themes: social media, cyberbullying, sleep deprivation, peer influences and pressures and well-being. From analysing these themes within the literature, the literature found that despite some of the positives: maintaining relationships and the ability to improve self-identity, the study found more negatives which included, lower self-esteem, poor mental health, peer pressure, cyberbullying and the lack of sleep due to being up on social media late at night.

Though, despite the study critically analysing these findings in the literature review, the young people and youth workers who took part in the study provided the study with greater depth and understanding around the topics explored in the literature review. In total, 43 young people ages 11-18 took part in the questionnaire and 7 young people took part in a focus group. In addition, interviews were carried out with youth workers to gain perspectives on their experiences in working with young people. From gaining data from the young people and youth workers it was evident that young people are very knowledgeable on social media and that social media is a part of their daily lives. This was identified when 49 out of 50 young people claimed that they use social media and the majority of the young people use social media every day (see appendices). Furthermore, the young people highlighted that social media can have a negative impact on one's mental health and suggested the possible ways in which social media can negative impact young people. For example, lower someone mental health and wellbeing. However, despite young people being aware of this, it is evident that young people, according to the youth workers who took part in the study, are often encouraging negative experiences on social media. Lastly, the study explores possible recommendations for further research.

Contents

Acronyms

UK – United Kingdom

UWTSD – University of Wales Trinity Saint David

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

FOMO – Fear of Missing Out

TA – Thematic Analysis

UNCRC – The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

NHS – National Health Service

NOS – National Occupational Statistics

Chapter 1: Introduction

Social media is current, prevalent and easily accessible by young people in today's society (Hiley, 2023). However, despite many taking advantage of the fact that social media is accessible and provides opportunity to share and view content online, there are many negative impacts that come with social media. The research focuses specifically on the possible impacts of social media. Clearly, there are many positives to social media: maintaining relationships and the ability to self-express and self-identity (Sadaghevani and Tatari, 2020). However, this comes with many negative impacts on individuals. For example, social media can negatively impact an individual's mental health due to cyberbullying, peer influence and pressures to post, like and comment on social medias as well as negatively impacting an individual's sleep (Elsayed, 2021). With this background information it is important to consider these negative impacts in the study to provide a critical analysis on the topics. Therefore, the study will explore 5 main themes: social media, sleep deprivation, cyberbullying, peer influences and pressures and well-being. By exploring these themes within the literature review, the study will be able to identify and critically analyse whether these themes are relevant to young people in rural area Pembrokeshire.

To explore these themes effectively, the study ensured to set achievable aims to ensure that the themes could be successfully and critically analysed. The overall aims of this study are to evaluate if social media is doing young people any good, looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people. To achieve this aim, the study set out 4 main objectives. Objective 1 was to undertake a detailed literature review and an in-depth critical analysis on the possible impacts of social media upon young people. This was by looking at 5 key themes mentioned above. Objective 2 set out to carry out anonymous questionnaires with young people, again exploring the 5 key themes. Objective 3 was to conduct a focus group with young people who access a youth club to gain their views and opinions on the themes explored in the literature review. Lastly, objective 4 was to undertake interviews with youth workers who work in local authority organisation and third sector on their opinions on young people on social media. Again, with links to the themes explored in the literature review (social media, sleep deprivation, cyberbullying, peer influences and pressures and well-being). By setting these aims, it provided the study with in-depth data, allowing the research to link respectively back to the literature.

The value of this research meant that the study was able to identify the possible impacts of social media, which hopefully youth workers, teachers and parents will consider reading and exploring as the study provides key recommendations as well as highlighting what youth workers, teachers and

parents can do to help prevent negative experiences and encourage positive experiences. Likewise, the study provides recommendations to further research to be explored in each theme.

The study firstly explores the literature that related to this study, looking at four key themes: social media, sleep deprivation, cyberbullying, peer influences and pressures and well-being. The study then justifies the methodology used to effectively and ethically conduct the empirical study. Lastly, the study critically explores the findings from the young people and youth workers and discusses and analyses the data collected back to the literature review. By doing this, it provides the study with the opportunity to evaluate if the literature explores relates to the young people in Pembrokeshire.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Chapter one focused on identifying the aims and objectives for this research study. However, within this literature review, objective one will be critically analysed. Objective two, three and four will be achieved using an empirical study, through collecting data. As a reminder the objective that will be achieved through the literature review is *to undertake a detailed literature review, an in-depth critical analysis of the implications of social media has on young people's mental health and well-being. Focusing on key themes.*

By carrying out an in-depth critical analysis of the above objective – the implications social media   has on young people's mental health and well-being – a considerable amount of research will be gained to benefit the research study. Effectively, this will generate key discussions around the implications of social media which will provide key themes within the literature review. Consequently, this will, in effect, construct and underpin influential literature prior to obtaining views from young people and youth workers in objective two, three and four. Therefore, to begin with, it would be practical to explore what it is meant by the term social media.

2.2. Theme 1: social media

Social media is a term used to describe online platforms for individuals. Davis (2016) claims that social media allows individuals to create and share content. For example, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat allow individuals to connect with their family and friends (Valkenburg, 2022). These platforms are very accessible through smartphones and enable individuals to engage during the day and is clearly intended to keep individuals engaged constantly with ''no clearly defined end point'' (Scott and Woods, 2019, pp. 1). In 2022, approximately ninety six percent of individuals living in the United Kingdom (UK) had access to a smartphone (Hiley, 2023). This implies how addictive and influential social media may be for individuals, especially for young people. Brailovoskaia and Teichert (2020, pp. 2) Identifies this within a recent journal suggesting that social media platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok and Snapchat all encourage ''addictive tendencies''. For example, Brailovoskaia and Teichert (2020) highlights that Facebook was linked to individuals experiencing anxieties, depression and stresses.

Within the past four years, social media usage increased rapidly, with it being the only means of communication, due to the COVID-19 outbreak which resulted in the whole country to go into a national lockdown (Gonzalex-Padilla and Tortolero-Blanco, 2020). Because of this, social media would have been the main source for young people to be able to continue to communicate with family and friends due to young people not being able to leave their houses or attend school and groups/clubs (Tsao et al., 2021). With this knowledge in mind, it is important to note that the use of social media has likely become routine for young people, suggesting that the lives of young people have changed significantly. Venegas-Vera et al (2020) highlights that individuals are now using social media more frequently than they would have pre-covid because of the ability to communicate in the comfort of their own homes. However, despite social media being easily accessible for individuals to connect with family and friends, social media is also a current, powerful and interactive means of communication that can influence and impact the way young people interact with one another (Goodyear and Armour, 2019). This suggests the seriousness of acknowledging the possible impacts of social media upon young people.

Furthermore, recent research indicates the immense influence social media can have upon young people, suggesting that if social media platforms are used in the correct way, it can help young people to ''transform lives of the youth from good to better'' (Akram and Kumar, 2017., pp352). For example, Sadaghevani and Tatari (2020) indicates that social media can play a positive role in individuals lives and can increase emotional support, self-expression and self-identity and to maintain friendships (Wesinstein et al., 2021) However, for young people to have a positive experience on social media, it is vital for young people to be educated on how to use social media appropriately to ensure that a safe environment is encouraged and maintained Sadaghevani and Tatari, 2020). Likewise, it is also noted by Sadaghevani and Tatari, 2020) that social media can also have negative impacts on an individual if used inappropriately. A recent journal by Elsayed (2021) suggests that negative impacts such as anxiety and depression, loneliness, cyberbullying and fear of missing out are the most common impacts that affect young people's mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, this study will focus mainly on the negative influences as it is vital to understand the reasonings behind young people's social media usage and to critically analyse the literature and compare to young peoples lived experiences. Scott and Woods (2019) argue that social media platforms are very accessible via smartphones which help to enable engagement through the day and night. To do this effectively, four themes will be critically examined: sleep deprivation, cyberbullying, peer influences and wellbeing.

2.3. Theme 2: Sleep Deprivation

According to the National Health Service (NHS), sleep deprivation occurs when an individual does not get enough sleep or sleeps throughout the day (NHS, 2022). It is argued that sleep retains a healthy mind and allows individuals to function well (Nollet, et all.,2022). Though, according to the Mental Health Foundation (2020) 66 percent of young people claimed that not having enough sleep per night has a negative impact on individuals mental health. For example, it can affect individuals' memory, moods and the ability to focus (Nollet, et all.,2022). Therefore, to ensure a healthy mind and ability to function well is encouraged, Hirshkowitz et al (2015) suggests that young people in primary schools should have between nine and elven hours sleep a night and young people in secondary schools should have between eight to ten hours sleep a night. In summary, despite this being a recommendation, it is important to take into consideration that not all young people can gain this much sleep or may face challenges which may prevent sleep (Scott et al, 2019).

One of the main challenges that young people may face is the constant alerts and notifications during the day and night from social media. Woods and Scott (2016) clarify that getting text notifications and social media alerts during the night has the potential to interrupt sleep. Similarly, Lee et al (2022) identifies that individuals who wake up to notifications during the night have a lower sleep efficiency, resulting in taking longer to fall back asleep and then sleeping longer during the day. Not to mention, constant alerts and notifications can build a significant amount of pressure on young people to be accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (Woods and Scott, 2016). Because of this it can present fear of missing out in young people (Alonzo, et al, 2021). This suggests that young people may find it difficult to relax when it comes to bedtime due to the worry of missing out on text messages and social media alerts. As a result, young people have an increase of anxiety and are awake most of the night or have their phones nearby for easy access in case of notifications (Sumen and Eygin, 2021).

To attempt to overcome these potential challenges, The Mental Health Foundation (2020) highlights suggestions on gaining quality sleep. For example, the importance of reducing screen time before going to bed. Moreover, Scott et al (2019) demonstrates this within a recent journal on social media and sleep, by revealing that social media usage before bed can ''displace sleep by delaying bedtimes'' (Scott et al., 2019. pp.540). Consequently, a brief period of sleep is gained. Therefore, Stiglic and Viner (2019) suggest that reducing screen time will encourage positive moods and attitudes as more sleep would be gained. With this understanding it is crucial to critically examine why young people are using social media before bedtime and how this can impact young people.

2.4. Theme 3: Cyberbullying

Firstly, one of the negative impacts to social media is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a term used to describe bullying that occurs online. This is by purposely using social media to communicate offensive, humiliating or/and aggressive behaviours towards another individual (Abaido, 2020). The impact of cyberbullying can be more harmful and damaging to a young person, than in-person bullying, as Zhu et al (2021, pp. 2) claims that ''perpetrators can act anonymously and connect easily with adolescents at any time''. Therefore, this literature suggests that perpetrators are likely to feel more confident in using social media to bully young people online due to its anonymity and accessibility.

Cyberbullying is a current issue that many young people are experiencing daily. A recent Journal by O'Rilley et al (2019), examined whether social media was impacting young people's mental health and wellbeing. The study took a qualitative approach, using focus groups to gain in-depth understanding from fifty-four young people aged eleven to eighteen living in the UK. The findings found that most young people claimed that social media ''was a risk to mental health'' (O'Rilley et al., 2019., pp.10). Similarly, Naslund et al. (2019) suggests that social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram and snapchat can all play a negative role on young people's mental health and well-being, with an increase of young people facing antagonistic social interactions. For example, cyberbullying. Furthermore, O'Rilley, et al (2019, pp.14) found that social media platforms encourage and facilitate cyberbullying behaviours in young people's lives. This signifies that young people notice the negative impacts of social media and how easily it is for young people, on social media, to be exposed to cyberbullying (Viner et al., 2019).

According to Baloch (2020) cyberbullying can generate psychological stresses, depression, low self-esteem and a lack in academic achievement in young people who are victims of cyberbullying. In addition, Rogers (2010) highlights the emotional and mental health impacts that cyberbullying can have upon a young person. Therefore, it is becoming apparent that cyberbullying can have a detrimental effect on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Likewise, Ozsungar (2022) suggests that not only does cyberbullying affects a young person's mental health, cyberbullying also harms physical health. For example, a lack of energy, irritability, poor sleep and headaches. Furthermore, Ozsungar (2022) implies that cyberbullying only needs to occur once for it to be harmful and detrimental on an individual. However, it is significant to note the possible reasonings behind why a perpetrator would cyberbully another individual. A recent study carried out by Myers and Cowie (2019, pp. 2), with a sample size of six thousand two hundred and sixty young people, found that individuals who were perpetrators of cyberbullying claimed that they, themselves, have been bullied ''in traditional ways''. This could suggest that individuals who are cyberbullying other young people may be facing bullying behaviours themselves and will use social media as a tool to anonymously

cyberbully other individuals to ''fight back'' (Myers and Cowie, 2019, pp. 2) due to their own insecurities.

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) in 2020 found that approximately one in five young people ages ten to fifteen years old in England and Wales have experienced cyberbullying in 2020. This works out to approximately ''764,000 children'' (NOS, 2020, p1).

2. Prevalence of bullying

Figure 1: Almost one in five children experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour in the previous 12 months

Proportion of children aged 10 to 15 years who experienced online bullying behaviours in the previous 12 months, by type of bullying behaviour, England and Wales, year ending March 2020
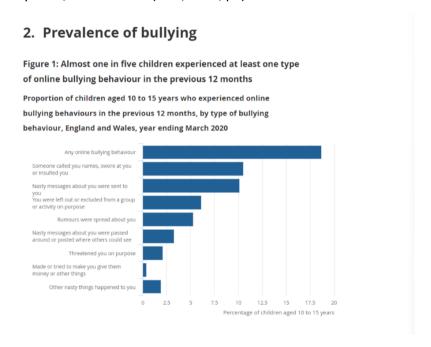
Figure 1: This table identifies the amount of young people ages ten to fifteen who have experiences cyberbullying in 2020, this is based on the type of bullying (NOS,2020).

It is evident from the table shown in figure one that young people having rude, offensive and hurtful messages about them were the most popular cyberbullying behaviour types which was experienced by 10 percent of young people aged ten to fifteen (NOS, 2020). Comparably, Smith (2015) carried out a similar study with one thousand and forty-five young people ages eleven to seventeen, who attend different secondary schools in the UK. Evidently, young people do not feel comfortable talking with their teachers about cyberbullying. Interestingly, this figure has remained low since 2011. Peacrce, et al. (2011) highlighted that eighty percent of young people would not feel confident in telling a teacher or member of staff if they experienced any kind of cyberbullying. This literature suggests that since 2011 to 2020, young people are still experiencing negative online experiences and it is evident that young people do not feel that they have the correct support in place to help prevent being victims of cyberbullying. Additionally, the literature is not clear as to what the social media platforms are doing to help prevent cyberbullying issues reoccurring.

Findings within Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2018) research suggests that to prevent cyberbullying behaviours, parents and teachers should educate their young people on the impacts of cyberbullying

and the long-term effects it can have on individuals, this could be by using case studies for it to be relatable (Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson, 2018). However, in 2011, Pearce et al (2011) highlighted the need for staff, students and parents to be educated on raising awareness of the impacts of bullying and cyberbullying as a key strategy to reduce cyberbullying. This was noted by providing assemblies, information for parents and training for teachers. Therefore, ten years on, cyberbullying is still a social issue that is very prevalent for young people

2.5. Theme 4: Peer Influences/pressures

From critically analysing cyberbullying, it would be interesting to evaluate if cyberbullying links with peer influences/pressures. According to ChildLine (2023, pp1) peer pressure is the 'feeling like you have to do something because people around you want you or expect you to do it''. Andrews et al (2020) suggests that young people often look up to their peers and develop their social norms and engage in peer pressure due to wanting to 'fit in'. Likewise, Sherman et al (2016. P1) highlights that peer pressure could be ''maladaptive'' as young people can be easily influenced by their peers to take part in certain activities. This suggests the importance of peer influence as it is argued that young people will have the opportunity to learn how to act and behave in the sociocultural environment that they are in (Sherman et al, 2018). However, the downside of this is that some young people may be influenced and pressured into risky behaviours.

A study that was carried out by Lenhart (2016) found that young people often found feelings of pressure to post content that makes them look good, will be popular and get a lot of likes and comments. With this constant pressure of wanting to 'fit in', (Kaikanto, 2018) claims that young people feel the need to gain attention and approval from social media in order to improve their confidence, self-worth and self-value. Similarly, Sandford and Quarmby (2018, pp. 45) gained first hand experiences from young people which found the importance of likes for young people and that ''they act as a form of peer endorsement''. This suggests that young people are facing pressure on social media to keep up to what their friends/influencers are doing. Additionally, it is clear that young people base their perceptions and perspectives based on likes and follows on social media (Goodyear, et al, 2018).

Furthermore, Steinsbekk (2018, pp.1) implies that social media encourages young people to 'show off' and compare themselves with others. Interviews were carried out and found that getting lots of likes and comments on social media can boost self-value and self-image (Steinsbekk, 2018). Likewise, found that gaining likes and comments on social media from friends was able to boost an individual's ''self-

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esteem and feelings of well-being'' (Gallagher, 2017. pp. 13). This could indicate that young people are under a lot of pressure to gain likes and comments to ensure that their self-esteem, self-image and well-being is not affected. However, because of this, Treitel (2020, pp.1) suggests that the constant pressure to post, gain likes and comments can encourage negative psychological impacts: ''Depression, anxiety and low self-esteem''. This evidently shows that in the long-term, young people will eventually develop bad mental health if they rely on likes and comments from social media (Steinsbekk, 2018). Despite being able to recognise the negative impacts this has on young people, many scholars have repeatedly researched that likes on social media is seen as a ''form of validation and measure of self-worth'' (Pritchard et al., 2021. pp.77). Therefore, with this knowledge it would be beneficial to gain young people's experiences of this to evaluate if the young people in the study relates to the literature and if the literature supports young people's perspectives.

2.6. Theme 5: Well-Being

Understandably, social media can have an impact on young people's well-being. As identified in theme 3 Young people, especially during their teenage years, begin to shape their self-image and will begin to compare themselves to others (social comparison) (Charoensukmongkol, 2018). For example, their peers, social media influences and/or family. Kennedy (2019) argues that this is due to social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook which provide young people with the opportunity to compare themselves with others online instantly. A study that assessed young people's emotions before and after being on social media found that young people had lower levels of self-value and worth (Walsh, 2020). Similarly, a current study by Rodgers and Rousseau (2022, p1) looked at ''highly visual and appearance-focused content''. The study found that young people are more ''likely to experience negative outcomes'' in relation to poorer body image and comparison (Rodger and Rousseau, 2022, p.289). This literature suggests how social media can easily portray false content towards young people, altering their perceptions of themselves and encourages negative social media experiences (Cingel, et al 2022). Because of this, it can be argued that young people's well-being could be affected from the moment a young person connects to an online platform due to a lack of self-regulation and vulnerability (Keels and Grealis 2020). However, despite highlighting some of the negative possibilities that social media can have on a young person's well-being, it is also important to highlight the positives that social media can have to increase an individual's wellbeing. According to Weinstein 92018) Young people gaining positive feedback on social media can increase positive well-being and self-esteem. In addition, Weinstein (2018) suggests some benefits to social media usage within young people, for example; giving young people the opportunity to maintain close relationships. This indicates that

despite there being negative views on social media which can negatively impact a young person's well-being, there are positives in social media by providing opportunities to interact with peers (Anderson and Jiang (2018) Therefore, by critically analysing and considering both aspects of how social media can play a positive and negative role in young people's well-being is important.

Furthermore, a recent study by O'Riley (2020) looked at social media on adolescents' mental health in the UK, focused on ''The good, the bad and the ugly'' (O'Rilley, 2020, pp1). The study used qualitative methods, such as focus groups, which gained views and perspectives from young people as well as from mental health practitioners from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). From this study, it was evident that young people revealed many ways in how they use social media to encourage positive mental health. Themes such as maintaining friendships, using social media apps for relaxing and being a distraction from other stresses in life were all reoccurring themes (O'Riley, 2020). However, young people also identified negative mental health due to social media with common themes around, pressures on 'likes', lack of sleep, cyberbullying and fear of missing out (FOMO). According to Edmonds (2018, p.1), FOMO refers to ''a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences which one is absent''. This links effectively back to theme 3, suggesting that young people often feel pressured and influenced by their peers and will ensure that their phones are turned on and nearby at all times (Winstone, et al, 2021). Though, Yau, et al (2021, pp. 10) considers the potential benefits to keeping phones on constantly, suggesting that if young people know that their phone is nearby then they may feel more relaxed and calmer and will be ''less likely to impulsively use it'', resulting in lower anxieties and better well-being.

Equally, it is also important to note that, depending on the social media platform, experiences can differ from young person to young person. Beyens et al (2020) found that social media platforms, such as Instagram, are very public platforms which enables young people to follow a diverse range of individuals which can possibly implement some negative views, such as social comparison. However, Waterloo et al (2018) argues that platforms, such as WhatsApp, are a more private means of communication which can allow young people to have more personal conversations without the anxieties of needing approval from others. This suggests that social media platforms offer a range of different ways for young people to communicate with one another and it is important to understand that, depending on the social media platform that young people use, different experiences will be gained which can have different influences on young people's well-being (Orben, 2020).

To conclude, it is clear that social media can impact a young person's wellbeing both positively and negatively. Hussain (2020) highlights that during COVID-19, social media was able to ''play a positive

role'' as it was an easily accessible tool that benefitted and supported individuals in coping with physical, emotional and social distancing. Therefore, it can be argued that because of COVID-19, social media can act as an easily accessible means of communication without individuals leaving the household preventing young people in wanting to be outside, seeking professional and well-being support and socialising with family and friends (Liu et al., 2021). From critically exploring this theme, it would be crucial to gain views and opinions from young people, evaluating whether young people do compare themselves to others as frequently as the literature suggests and if young people feel the importance of attention and approval from social media to improve their well-being

2.7. Research Gap and Conclusion

The literature review mainly focuses on literature based on the UK, from carrying out the critical literature review it Is evident that there is a gap within the literature on rural areas. For example, rural areas such as Pembrokeshire. Therefore, to overcome this gap within literature, it would be significant to consider the young people in the rural areas of Pembrokeshire to provide a clear understanding of the possible impact of social media upon young people. To do this effectively, the study will take an interpretivist approach and will gain an understanding of the lived experiences and opinions from young people and youth workers in Pembrokeshire. This will be by carrying out questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. In addition, the themes explored within the literature review will also be explored with the young people and youth workers who participate in the study. By doing this, it will enable the study to critically analyse and reflect on the themes in the literature to current lived experiences of young people. In addition, this will hugely benefit the research study as clearly from the literature, social media has many negative impacts on young people with research indicating that it can impact young people's mental health, well-being and social skills (Keels and Grealis 2020). However, it is also important to highlight the possible positives such as the ability to stay connected with others and the ability to maintain relationships (Weinstein, 2018).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1: Literature Review, the aim of this research study is to investigate whether social media is doing young people any good, looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people. To achieve this aim, objectives two (carrying out anonymous questionnaires with young people accessing youth services in Pembrokeshire), objective three (conducting a focus group with young people who access a youth club in Pembrokeshire) and objective four (undertaking interviews with Youth Workers to explore their opinions on the implications of social media upon young people) will be achieved. However, to do this successfully the implementation of methodology is crucial to obtain and collect data from young people and youth workers. Therefore, this chapter will critically analyse the type of research paradigm taken, the research approach, methods, sample type and size, ethical considerations and lastly the analytical approach taken.

3.2. Research Paradigm

The term research paradigm is used to represent a researcher ''world view'' through suggestions, beliefs and perceptions (Kivunja and Kutini, 2017). Likewise, a research paradigm is a type of method that allows researchers to effectively conduct research by enabling the researcher to implement their views. This is through being able to understand how to successfully and positively understand how specific theories and practices of research works (Rehman and Albarthi, 2016). Consequently, it was important to ensure that clear aims and objectives were set. By doing this, it guaranteed that the study had an explicit view of what the research wanted to gain. likewise, implementing the aims and objectives allowed the research to consider ontology and epistemology, providing the study with an understanding of what reality is, focusing on the truth (ontology) and how it is a possibility to know what reality is (epistemology) (Celik and Koksal, 2019). This section will critically justify the ontological and epistemological position the study took to better understand the study.

3.2.1. Ontology

Prior to looking at what epistemology approach to consider (positivism or interpretivism), ontology was sought. Research suggests that ontology is ''the assumptions we make about the kind and nature of reality and what exists' (Al-Saadi, 2014, pp. 1). Within the study, it was important to have a clear

understanding of what was perceived as reality and to have an understanding and perception of reality and how things work (Scotland, 2012). For that reason, the study focuses on a relativism view, that reality is socially constructed and subjective, suggesting that there is not one true reality and that reality can be different from one person to the next (Moon and Blackman, 2017). Therefore, this study looks specifically at individuals experiences and argues that ''reality is human experience and human experience is reality'' (Levers, 2013, pp.2).

3.2.2. Epistemology

Taking a relativism approach to the study would suggest that an interpretivist epistemology would be best suited. Like relativism, interpretivism allows the research to look specifically at the meaning and reasonings behind individuals' actions. Rehman and Alharthi (2016, pp.56) claims that taking an interpretivist approach ensures that social phenomena are perceived ''through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher'. Similarly, Wan (2022) argues that an interpretivist approach allows the researcher to focus on a specific topic and gives the researcher the opportunity to experience the study with first-hand experiences. Therefore, it can be argued that the study took on an interpretivist approach effectively as it focused specifically on young people's attitudes, behaviours and interactions with social media, exploring the possible impacts. This was by applying quantitative methods to the study and speaking with young people and youth workers on their experiences. Furthermore, Wisker (2019) and Chowdhury (2014) would agree that the study successfully took on an interpretivist approach as it gained reasonings and a better understanding behind individuals' first-hand experiences, attitudes and views.

3.3. Research Approach

From taking a relativist view and an interpretivist approach to the study, it was important that qualitative methods were carried out. Qualitative methods such as, focus groups, interviews and open-ended questionnaires were applied to the study, Dawadi et al (2021) would agree that this is an interpretivist research approach as the data collected from participants was able to bring a variety of experiences from a diverse range of young people. Furthermore, unlike quantitative methods which focus on the numerical side of data, Busetto et al (2020) explains that by using qualitative methods, the study generated data from individuals' perspectives. Likewise, Almalki (2016, pp. 291) highlights the benefits suggesting the data gains ''meanings, purpose or reality' for individuals. Evidently, by using qualitative methods, gaining first-hand experiences from young people and having an emphasis

on understanding young people's views and opinions enabled the study to effectively critically analyse the literature within the literature review back to the data. As a result, this would validate the research aims and objectives.

Despite arguing that the study focuses prominently on qualitative methods, the study also does consider quantitative methods. As mentioned above, quantitative methods include questionnaires which provide numerical data (Punch and Oancea, 2014). Quantitative methods were applied to the study within the questionnaires. For example, gathering closed-ended questions such as, age and gender were collected. By gaining this data from closed-ended questions it was possible to compare the young people in relation to age and gender, and being able to identify the amount of young people who agreed or disagreed on certain questions. Therefore, despite only having a small aspect on quantitative questions added to the questionnaires, this provided the study to quantify the data and gain statistical evidence on the study and background information on the young people (MacDonald and Headlam, N.D).

Ivankova and Wingo (2018) would claim that the study takes a mixed methods approach as both approaches gains viewpoints on the same topic and provides statistical information which can help to understand the experiences and social influences of young people. In addition, Hitchcook (2022, pp. 518) proposes that by applying a mixed methods approach allowed the study to capture specific findings as it would have encouraged the study to ''yield a better understanding of phenomena''. For example, the qualitative methods enabled the study to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. However, the quantitative methods allowed the study to statistically compare the participants. McKim (2017) would argue that taking a mixed methods approach would have generated validity within the findings, enhancing and enriching the data.

3.4. Justification of Methods used

Although there is a mixed methods approach, the study is overwhelmingly interpretivist with qualitative methods but does involve some quantitative methods. Raking both methods into account was the most suitable approach, as despite the study focusing mainly on qualitative methods, implementing quantitative methods ensured that the research gained the most adequate data. Within this section it will justify the methods used for the study.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

When carrying out the study, the aim was to explore the possible impacts of social media. Objective 2 focused on carrying out anonymous questionnaires with young people who access youth services in Pembrokeshire to gain their feedback on views and experiences of social media.

The main use of questionnaires is to gain feedback from a large number of participants on a specific topic. Lambert (2019, pp. 1) expresses the importance of questionnaires as they allow the researcher to gain a ''surface impression' from participants on whether they agree or disagree with the research question and to establish participants experiences. Likewise, Denscombe (2017, pp. 31) highlights that when carrying out research, if the aim is to gain views and opinions from individuals, online questionnaires are designed to gain information ''straight from the horse's mouth''. This suggests that participants have the opportunity to freely express their views anonymously and honestly. With this in mind, it was important that the online questionnaire had open-ended questions as well as closed-ended questions. Dalati and Gomex (2018) argues that unlike closed questions where the questions can only be answered by multiple choice questions or yes or no questions, open-ended questions provide participants with the opportunity and freedom to express in as much detail as they wish. Therefore, with the nature of this study being to gain first-hand experiences and opinions from the young people it was important that the questionnaire was thought of carefully to gain as much data as possible.

Despite the benefits of the questionnaire allowing to gain data from many young people, Biggam (2021) mentions that questionnaires can be time consuming. Therefore, it was important when carrying out the questionnaire with young people that it took less than 10 minutes to complete, though Ball (2019) highlights that the advantage is that participants can take as long as they wish. It is also important to mention that online questionnaires are not costly and displace the use of paper (Bayak and Narayan, 2019).

In total, 30 questions were asked within the questionnaire. This could be seen as a lot of questions However, this number of questions were not an issue and young people were happy to answer the questions asked, with detail and opinions. This provided the study with in-depth data. However, in future despite this number of questions not being an issue to the study, lowering the amount would also be beneficial as having more questions creates more work on the study to analyse the data thoroughly.

3.4.2. Focus groups

The study also implemented the use of a focus group. By carrying out a focus group it allowed the researcher to explore themes found in the questionnaire further and to ensure that Objective 3, *to*

conduct a focus group with young people who access a youth club in Pembrokeshire, to gain their views on the impacts of social media, was achieved. Wisker (2019) explores how focus groups can influence research positively, highlighting that focus groups allow an in-depth discussion around a research topic which can capture young people's attitudes, experiences and thoughts and feelings. This suggests that when carrying out the focus group it gave the research a greater understanding around the possible impacts of social media, ensuring that all young people's views were considered, and that young people had the opportunity to express their experiences (Punch and Oancea, 2014). Likewise, the focus group provided the young people with the ability to hear others' opinions on the topic and considering peers feelings (Thelwall and Nevill, 2021). Evidently, this shows how valuable focus groups are. Though, Gundumogula (2020) suggests that if the researcher has too much involvement in the focus group it can cause bias. However, when carrying out the focus group, the focus group found it difficult to stay on track on the topic. Therefore, to ensure that there was no bias but some structure, prompt questions were given to the young people (See appendix). This was very successful and enabled the focus group to get back on track as it allowed young people to have questions to discuss between them (Cyr, 2019).

By allowing young people to have the opportunity to discuss the topic of social media together, Wisker (2019) argues that it would have encouraged the young people to change their views or attitudes towards their perspectives as it will have made them think and take into consideration other viewpoints. Interestingly, this occurred during the focus group when a couple of young people changed their views or answers to topics discussed due to their peers' perceptions and from further discussions. It was clear that the young people gave very honest responses before thinking thoroughly, after discussions within the group many views did change.

3.4.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

Objective 4 set out to undertake interviews with Youth Workers to explore their opinions on the implications of social media upon young people. With this objective in place, interviews with five members of staff were conducted. Two of the youth workers were interviewed from a local authority organisation and three of the Youth Workers were interviewed from a third sector youth organisation.

Before carrying out the interviews it was important that a clear set of questions were thought of that considered young people and social media. Therefore, drawing up relevant questions that are linked to the literature review was important to ensure that the data could answer the research question. Denscmbe (2017) suggests that semi-structured interviews were used effectively as the interviews had some sort of structured but also allowed the youth workers to develop the questions further due

to the open-ended questions asked. This allowed the youth workers to express their own views freely. Likewise, Brown and Danaher (2019) highlights that to carry out semi-structured interviews successfully, it is important to have a set of questions to be explored but also open to further discussions. This occurred during the interview as all 5 youth workers were asked the same 10 questions and youth workers had the opportunity to explore the questions as in-depth as they wished. Husband (2020) would agree that by carrying out semi-structured interviews, allowed additional data and perspectives from youth workers who work with the young people on a daily basis. Therefore, different experiences and opinions were thoroughly explored.

3.5. Sample size and type

In total, 43 young people ages 11 to 18 took part in the questionnaire. Upon analysis, 19 males, 23 females and 1 young person who identified as non-binary. Of these young people, 18 of them were aged 11 to 12 years old, 16 were ages 13 to 14 years old, 1 young person was aged 15 to 16 years old and 8 of the young people were 17 to 18 years old. In addition, 7 young people aged 13-16 took part in a focus group and 5 members of staff from a third sector organisation and local authority organisation took part in the interview.

Originally the study was going to take on a snowball sample type for the questionnaires. This type of sampling is commonly known as the best sample technique to be used within qualitative research as it encourages participants with knowledge and experiences in the research topic (Chaim, 2008) However, despite the intentions to use this type of sample, the use of purposive sampling was taken to ensure that the study was in accordance with University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice and the NSPCC Ethics. The UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice and the NSPCC Ethics, highlights the importance of young people under the age of 16 needing consent from either a parent or guardian or ''those in loco parentis'' (UWTSD, 2022, pp.23). Therefore, taking a snowball sample would have proven difficult as this type of sampling would have required young people to freely pass on the questionnaire without consent. To overcome this, the study took on a purposive sample instead.

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which allows the researcher to gain data from individuals who will be able to provide relevant information, views or opinions relating to the research study (Nurs, 2020). For example, this study aimed to gain views and opinions from young people's perspectives on social media and the possible impacts on social media, whether it is doing young people any good. With this research aim in mind, carrying out the research in two youth centres in Pembrokeshire and working within one of the settings, it was clear that this topic is relatable and

relevant to the current young people in the youth centres in Pembrokeshire. Likewise, Acharya et al 2013, pp.332) would indicate that purposive sampling was best suited as the young people are ''at the tight place at the right time''. Therefore, taking a purposive sample ensured that the study gained data from suited young people accessing the youth centres who are knowledgeable and who will be able to benefit from the research study (Etikan et al., 2016). However, Sharma (2017) argues that because purposive sampling encourages the researcher to reach out to relevant participants, the study could be biased. Therefore, to overcome this, it was crucial that throughout the study all views were considered and that the views and opinions were not always in agreement. By having this mindset when carrying out the research with the young people, it allowed the data to be unique and unbiased as the data was just young people's perspectives with no involvement of the researcher's opinions.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical Considerations are put in place to protect the rights, welfare and the dignity of all participants and the researcher during a research study (World Health Organisation, 2022). For example, considering consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality, anonymity, prevention to harm and data protection (BERA, 2018) are all key ethical considerations that were taken into account when carrying out this study with young people.

However, before taking these ethical considerations into account, an application for ethical approval was carried out. This application is put in place to ensure that the research study was safe, this was by following the UWTSD Research Ethics & Intergrity Code of Practice (2022) and BERA (2018) guidelines (See appendix, B). With approval of the application of ethical approval, it is important to highlight within this section the ethical considerations that would apply to this study, especially as the young people are ages 11-18.

3.6.1. Consent

In accordance with the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018), it was important that all young people and youth workers gave their consent to participate in the research study. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (2023) highlights that where young people are involved in research, informed consent is required. For example, ensuring the young people were aware of the purpose and aims of the study, the risks and benefits of participating and that it is voluntary Therefore, when writing up the participation forms for the questionnaires, focus groups and

interviews it was important to include this information within the information participation form (See appendix) to ensure that the young people were aware of what they were agreeing to and were aware of their right to withdraw. This was also implemented for the youth workers too to ensure that BERA (2018) guidelines were followed.

Involving young people was crucial in the consent process, UWTSD (2022) implies that young people have a right to take part in research, to be listened to and have their thoughts and feelings viewed. However, due to the sample of participants for the questionnaires and focus groups being ages 11-18, the UWTSD Research Ethics & Intergrity Code of Practice (2022) requires that those under the ages of 16 would require assent from either a parent or ''those in loco parentis'' (UWTSD, 2022, PP.23). When carrying out the questionnaire and focus group it was important that the study adhered to the university's research ethics as the young people involved would need consent BERA (2018). This is good practice to ensure that the study complies with ethical considerations and to protect the young people and researcher (United Nations Convention on the right of the child (UNCRC), 1989).

However, due to carrying out the questionnaires during a drop-in session with the young people at the youth centres, it would have proved difficult to get the young people to gain consent there and then from parents. To overcome this barrier, the managers at the two youth centres acted on behalf of the young people as loco parentis and provided a letter to confirm this in writing, highlighting the importance in the topic and the benefits it will have on the study and for their organisation (See appendix 8.5). By gaining loco parentis from the youth work manager at both the youth organisations meant that the research study respected the views of all young people and respected and implemented article 12 of the UNCRC (1989). Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) highlights the importance of allowing all young people to have the ability to express their views and feelings and to have their views considered. Therefore, by taking this into consideration meant that the study effectively listened to the young people by gaining their views on social media and the possible impacts but by doing so safely and securely.

It can be argued that the young people who took part in this study are Gillick competent (NSPCC, 2022). Griffith (2016) highlights that Gillick competency is the term used to effectively identify any young person under the age of 16 who can demonstrate their maturity to understand the research study. This is by the young person understanding the topic of the study and the process of the study and to act and give consent themselves without parental consent **(Hunter and Pierscionek, 2007).** Understandably, it is important to note that Gillick competency is person specific and does not apply to all under 16. However, **Article 13 of the UNCRC (1989**) highlight that young people have a right to express their opinions and feelings and have access to any information that is not illegal. Therefore, it can be argued that despite gaining consent and the youth workers acting on behalf of the young

people as their loco parentis (ensuring that the research adhered to the universities ethical guidelines) the research would have also been considered safe, confidential and safe of harm as the young people where the study took place all have Gillick competency and topics around social media are often had with these young people as it is an important topic, current and relevant to the young people in Pembrokeshire.

3.6.2. Right to withdraw

Upon gaining consent from the young people, the youth workers and loco parentis from the youth workers, it was also vital within the consent process that all participants were aware of their right to withdraw. In accordance with BERA (2018) and UWTSD Research Ethics & Intergrity Code of Practice (2022) participants were also aware of how their involvement in the study would benefit the research, however their right to withdraw was always available if desired. Denscombe (2017, pp. 343) claims the importance of providing participants with this information as it allows participants with the freedom and opportunity to take ownership as well as protecting ''the researcher from any possible accusation''. This suggests that the recruitment of participants and information sharing process was done safely and securely as the study always ensured the safety of the participants and their rights were considered at all times. Furthermore, before carrying out the data collection methods, Bos (2020) argues that it is crucial to make it clear to participants that they can withdraw even after the data was collected. This was implemented successfully to the study by making this clear and evident within the participation information form for each of the methods carried out. In addition, it was also mentioned verbally during and after the interview and focus group and that participants can withdraw without consequence and no offence would be taken (Korir et al., 2019). This would link respectfully back to the UNCRC Article 12 which highlights the respect for young people's views. Therefore, the study effectively respects Article 12 by allowing young people to change and respect their views if they wish (UNCRC,1989) However, the study did only give the participants two weeks to withdraw as the data was then used to produce graphs and to carry out the thematic analysis.

3.6.3. Data Protection and Storage

In accordance with The Data Protection Act 2018, all participants were reminded that their data would not be stored longer than is needed and that their data would be ''used fairly, lawfully and transparently'' (The Data Protection Act, 2018., pp. 1) In addition, participants were informed on how their data would be used, how they could withdraw their data from the research project and how they can have access to the research study once the study is completed (The Data Protection Act, 2018). This was noted in the information sheet provided when participants carried out the questionnaire,

focus group and interviews (see appendices). Likewise, it was crucial to reassure the participants that all data will be stored safely in a secure folder, password protected and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data. The UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice (2022) would claim that the study would have effectively implemented data protection as the document highlights the importance of ensuring that all data collected is in secure. By explaining these data protection protocols to all participants, it will have encouraged participants to feel at ease when taking part in the research as all data is safely stored, anonymised and will not be used for any other purposes (BERA,2018)

3.6.4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity were also vital within the study to ensure that no harm was made towards the young people and youth workers. In relation to young people, the study implemented Article 16 of the UNCRC (1990) effectively by respecting the right to privacy. This was by ensuring the young people remained anonymous and by ensuring the young people were aware of this and that all data collected would be anonymised. This also mentioned to the youth workers too, to ensure that they felt conformable and that the study was confidential and anonymous. Nduna et al. (2022) claims the importance of confidentiality and anonymity by implying the significance in limiting the probability of being able to trace the participants. Therefore, by not providing the young people or youth workers names ensured that the study fully anonymised and respected the young people and youth workers responses without being identified. Furthermore, by ensuring the study is confidential and anonymised young people and youth workers would have the opportunity to freely express their views and opinions without worrying that they would be identifiable as if this was not considered, young people and youth workers may have not honestly answered the questions asked (Warner et al., 2011).

3.7. Analytical Approach

The analytical approach that the study takes is a thematic analysis (TA). A TA is the most relevant method of analysis when pursuing young people's experiences, understandings and opinions (Kinger and Varpio, 2020). Similarly, Clarke and Braun (2015) highlight that a TA is an important and beneficial analytical approach to recognise patterns within data, associated with the participants personal and lived experiences. By recognising patterns within data, codes are generated which result into themes (Braun and Clarke, 2020). However, it is recognised that taking a TA in research has its disadvantages. For example, Nowell et al (2017) stresses that taking a TA can cause inconsistency and a lack of coherence. Therefore, when carrying out this study it was important to ensure that these

disadvantages did not occur as taking a TA was the best analytical approach to take with the type of methods used.

To overcome this potential barrier to the study, it was important to research the different types of coding that could be implemented to ensure that the patterns within data were effectively linked to themes. Therefore, the study took a deductive coding approach which meant that the study started with key themes prior to the data being collected (Braun and Clarke, 2012). As an example, within the literature review, five themes were critically explored: social media, cyberbullying, sleep deprivation, peer influences and pressures and wellbeing. From exploring these themes in-depth the questions asked during the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups were based from these themes. Moreover, Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019). would claim that this study effectively took a deductive coding approach as the study ensured that the codes generated from the data linked back to the themes. To effectively code the data collected, the questionnaire, focus group and interviews asked specific questions linking to the literature and then were highlighted in specific colours to match specific themes (see appendices).

Chapter 4: Findings, Discussion and Analysis

As mentioned previously within Chapter 3: Methodology, taking a thematic analysis was important for this study as it ensured that the data collected linked back to Chapter 2: Literature Review. Taking a thematic analysis approach provided the study with consistency and accuracy as the same themes within the literature was explored. Such as: social media, sleep deprivation, cyberbullying, peer influences and pressures and wellbeing. As a reminder, the study set out to examine whether social media is doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people. The data and analysis were able to successfully achieve objective 2, 3 and 4 which were set out to gain views and perspectives on young people and youth workers experiences by carrying out questionnaires, focus groups and interviews.

4.1. Theme 1 – Social media

This was a theme that occurred during the research process. This allowed the study to gain an insight on how many young people are using and accessing social media. In total, 42 (98%) use social media and only 1 young person (2%) does not (see appendices). In addition, 98% of participants use social media every day, with only one participant stating that they use social media weekly (see figure 2 below)
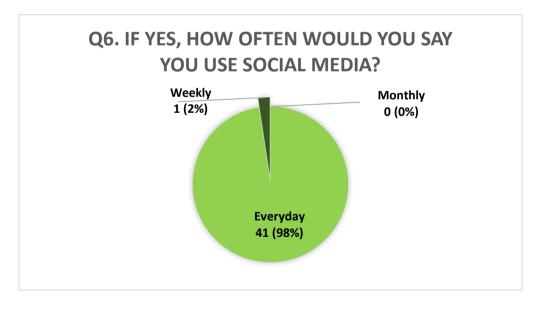

Figure 2: Question to young people asking how often they use social media.

4.1.1 Results on social media being a positive or negative experience

Questionnaire:

When carrying out the study, the most important question was to ask young people during the questionnaire and focus group and youth workers in the interviews if they think social media is a positive or negative experience. This was asked through open-ended question.

18 participants stated that they thought social media was both a negative and positive **experience (see appendices).** Young people all expressed similar feelings towards social media. Feelings such as, negatively impacting mental health were raised and cyberbullying. Though, young people also highlighted positives such as, being able to easily communicate, learning new things and it being fun (see appendices):

> *''Social media can be both positive and negative. Positives are you can communicate with friends and family and reach out to them. But on the other hand, it can be negative too because some people on social media can be nasty. It's also full of trends that people may feel the need to join in on to keep up and impress other people'' (Anonymous participant)*

Focus Group:

Young people during the focus group were also asked the same question regarding their views on if social media is a positive or negative experience. Again, all 7 participants felt that social media has both positive and negative aspects. Young people highlighted that if social media is used correctly then it can be a positive experience for individuals. Though if used incorrectly, issues with cyberbullying and insecurities could arise (See appendices):

> *''Depends on how it is used. Like you can watch videos and talk to your friends but then also comes with all the bad stuff with it like people you don't know trying to talk to you or people being mean and nasty to you over text or sending inappropriate picture'' (Participant 7 from Focus group)*

Interviews:

Lastly, youth workers also commented very similar responses but had a outside perspective on the question. Youth workers claimed similar results to the young people but also highlighted the importance of young people being ''emotionally intelligent'' (Youth Worker 1, See appendices) as

youth workers claimed that the young people, they work with have access to social media 24 hours a day:

" I think if used responsibly and young people are emotionally intelligent then it can be very positive, but on the flip side, it is so addictive and often without re-percussions for behaviours that are displayed online that young people can become absolutely vile to each other'' (Youth Worker 1)

'' The biggest issue with social media in my opinion is that there is no release from it, its on 24 hours a day there is nothing stopping anyone from messaging you weather you are friends or not and due to the scrolling nature and intentness of the apps it is highly addictive.'' (Youth Worker 3)

4.1.4. Discussion and Analysis

Unsurprisingly, the majority of young people who took part in the study (98%) all have and use social media**. Taso et al (2021)** would imply that this is due to COVID-19 as this was the only means of communication for young people, suggesting more young people would have more accessibility to social media. Additionally, **Hiley (2023**). found that during 2022, 96% of the UK had accessed to a smartphone. Despite this, **Scott and Woods (2019)** highlights how easily accessible social media are nowadays and that social media is made to encourage and influence individuals to be constantly engaged. Therefore, because of COVID-19 and social media being easily accessible through phones and computers, it is evident and understandable why 98% of the young people taking part in the study have and use social media everyday (See appendices)

Predictably when collecting and analysing the data, Youth Worker 3 in the interview highlighted that there ''is no release'' from social media and claims that social media is ''highlight **addictive''** for young people **(see appendices) Venegas-Vera et al (2020)** would argue that this is because young people have the ability to connect with family and friends in the confront of their own homes and therefore may hesitate to be outside socialising. During the focus group, Participant 1 highlighted how socialising on social media was ''easier'' and did not have to make effort (see appendices). Though, **Goodyear and Amour (2019)** would argue the powerful influence it can have on young people and that social media can impact the way young people communicate and interact with one another. This suggests that young people need to be in the position to use social media correctly because if used inappropriately it can negatively impact young people's mental health **(Akaram and Jumar, 2017).**

Furthermore, during the study it was important to examine participants views on social media by asking them if they find social media a positive or negative experience. Upon analysing the data, it is evident that young people had mixed views on social media. Young people and youth workers highlited many positives; the ability to connect with family and friends and learning new skills (See apendicies).) **Sadaghevani and Tatari (2020)** and **Weinstein et al (2021**) would agree that these positives to social media can impact a young person's emotional support, self-expression and maintaining relationships. Though, as shown in the results, Youth worker 1 argues that young people need to be using social media correctly and be emotionally intelligent to gain a positive experience on social media. This suggests that if this is not adopted, young people may face challenges when online. **Sadaghevani and Tatari (2020)** supports this by claiming that it is important young people understand how to use social media appropriately to ensure that a safe environment is maintained.

Interestingly, when collecting data, many young people argued that social media can be negative (see appendices), young people highlighted that it can impact self-esteem, pressure to keep up with trends, addiction and constant access. These themes were also highlighted in the literature by **Elsayed (2021)** who suggests negative impacts such as: anxiety and depression, loneliness, cyberbullying and fear of missing out can be experienced. **Goodyear and Armour (2019)** would indicate that this is due to how powerful and interactive social media is in the 21st century and that with this understanding and data from young people was important to acknowledge the possible impacts.

To conclude, to further the findings and analysis it would be crucial to study how common social media was within young people ages 11-18 pre COVID-19 and if young people's views and opinions on the experiences of social media were similar to now. This would be beneficial as currently, 98% of young people who took part in the study use social media and majority of the young people claimed negative views of social media **(see appendices)**. In addition, it would be beneficial to research further into young people being emotionally intelligent as it would provide a clear answer as to whether positive experiences of social media are due to emotionally intelligent young people.

4.2. Theme 2 – Sleep Deprivation

When researching the possible impacts of social media, sleep deprivation occurred frequently within different journals. With this in mind, it was important to study whether sleep deprivation was linked to late social media usage and if this was an impact on young people. Therefore, young people were asked a variety of questions (See appendices). However, the most important questions which generated in-depth data was if they turned their phones off at night and if they find notifications a distraction when trying to sleep.

4.2.1. Results on turning phone off at night

Questionnaire:

Firstly, Young people during the questionnaires were asked if they turned their phone off at night and if they did not why. Majority of young people claimed that they did not turn their phones off as they were either on their phones at night, needed the phone for an alarm or kept it on in case of emergencies:

> '' I tend to check messages from certain people, or my brain won't shut off so I just scroll through Instagram and TikTok'' (Anonyms Participant)
>
> ''Because in case someone is in an emergency'' (Anonyms Participant)
>
> ''Because my friends are messaging me and I want to be nosy (Anonyms Participant)

Focus Group:

All 7 participants in the focus group claimed that they are up late on their phones at night which suggests that they do not turn their phones off. 100% of the participants stated that they are on their phones until early hours of the morning and spend a lot of their time on social media apps:

> ''Oh I'm up till like half 5'' (Participant 4)
>
> ''Yeah, you feel like there is nothing else to do at night so you just go on your phone but you don't realise how long you're on it for, I find I don't get much sleep then at night'' (Participant 1)

Interviews:

It was also important to ask the youth workers on their perspectives and if they find that the young people, they work with are spending a lot of their time at night on social media (See appendices). Youth workers all highlighted their experience with reoccurring themes around being told by young people about late night social media use:

> '' Yes, young people tell us they are on social media at night and sometimes not sleeping properly due to this'' (Youth Worker 4)

4.2.4. Results on notifications being a distraction:

Questionnaire:

Secondly, young people were asked if they found notifications a distraction when trying to sleep. This helped to understand if young people were spending a lot of time at night on their phone, getting a lack of sleep, due to notifications from their phones.

26 participants said that they did not find notifications a distraction when trying to sleep, 15 participants said yes, that they did find notifications a distraction, and only 2 participants said sometimes (see appendices):

> *''Well, I'm usually the one messaging them so not really'' (Anonymous participant)*
> *'Nope I'm used to it'' (Anonymous participant)*
> *''Sometimes if I'm trying to sleep and then it goes off'' (Anonymous participant)*

Focus Group

All 7 participants during the focus group also had similar answers (see appendices) expressing that they felt that notifications being a distraction and it was clear that the participants felt the pressure to always be available:

> *''Yeah because it pings and your intrigued as to what and who it is'' (Participant 1)*
> *''Yeah and it might be important so keep me up on my phone'' (Participant 5)*

4.2.5. Discussion and Analysis

By analysing the data thoroughly, 90% of young people who took part in the study said that the keep their phones on during the night (see appendices). Young people also highlighted similar feelings towards this by claiming that they do not turn their phones off in case of emergencies, speaking with friends and having nothing else to do than being on their phones (See appendices). For example, one young person stated that they are up late at night on their phone '' 'Because my friends are messaging me and I want to be nosy'' (see appendices). In addition, another young person also claimed that they had to check their social medias otherwise their ''brain won't shut off'' (See appendices). **Alonzo et al (2021)** claims that young people are on their phones constantly, especially at night, because of fear of missing out. This suggests that young people always have access to their phones so that they do not

miss out on anything, resulting in young people finding it difficult to relax due to an increase of anxiety **(Sumen and Eygin, 2021**).

With this qualitative data, it is evident that 90% of young people participating in the study are not gaining sufficient sleep as young people highlighted that they are up until early hours in the morning on their phones (See appendices). **Nollet et al (2022)** would argue that this would have an effect on the young people's memory, mood and their ability to focus. This could imply that there is a possibility that the young people in the study may find it difficult to concentrate the following day in school /college to stay focused due to not getting the correct amount of sleep **(Hirshkowitz et al, 2015).**

From asking the young people if they turned their phones off at night, it was important to understand the impacts of this on the young people. Within the literature, **Scott et al (2019)** claims that if young people are not gaining the correct amount of sleep, there could be reasonings behind this. For example, **Woods and Scott (2016)** argue that from not turning phones off at night, allows constant alerts from social medias which is likely to interrupt sleep and will present lower sleep efficiency in individuals **(Lee et al, 2022).** Therefore, it was beneficial to explore this with the young people who took part in the study to gain first-hand experiences.

Exploring this within the data showed that phone notifications do play a key role in being a distraction for 31 young people when trying to get to sleep. Despite 31 participants not turning their phones of at night, Interestingly, 26 out 43 participants in the questionnaire claimed that they did not find notifications a distraction, though 15 participants claimed that they were a distraction and only 2 said sometimes (See appendices). In addition, 5 out of 7 participants in the focus group stated that they find notifications a distraction at night which encourages them to stay up on their phones (see appendices).

Youth workers who took part in the study also commented that they had witnessed and overheard conversations form young people implying that they do not get enough sleep or up late at night on social media (See appendices). Because of this, Youth workers suggest that young people may not be ''sleeping properly due to this'' (Youth Worker 4, see appendices). **Scott et al (2019)** would suggest that young people are delaying their sleeping because of social media. Though, the young people in the study claimed that they could not sleep or switch off if did not check their phones before sleep (See appendices). Additionally, participant 1 from the focus group expressed that ''there is nothing else to do at night so you just go on your phone but you do not realise how long you are on it for, I find I don't get much sleep then at night' (Participant 1, see appendices). **The Mental Health Foundation (2020**) would suggest that to overcome this, young people should be encouraged to reduce screen time by not going on social media after a certain time. Likewise, **Sriglic and Viner (2018)** highlights the positives in reducing screen time as it can promote healthier mindsets and quality sleep.

To further the data, it would be interesting to study how much screen time the young people use a day and to explore whether young people would reduce their time screen for a week and then investigate the young people's experiences on if they felt they gained more quality sleep when not on their phones late on night.

4.3. Theme 3 – Cyberbullying

The third theme that was asked towards young people and youth workers related to cyberbullying. All 43 young people who took part in the questionnaire and all 7 participants in the focus group were all aware of what cyberbullying is when asked. Young people were also asked if they think cyberbullying happens often. 35 participants who took part in the questionnaire stated that they think cyberbullying does happen very often, with 4 participants who felt that it does not happen often and 4 participants who were not sure. (See figure 3 below))
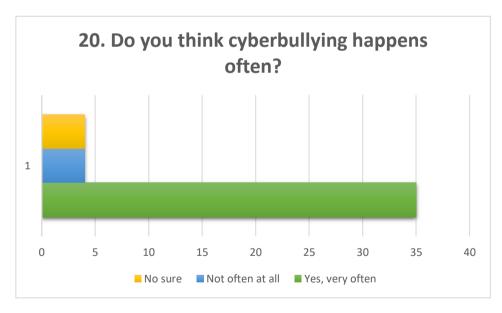

Figure 3: results from young people on if cyberbullying happens often.

4.3.1. Results asking young people if they think it is ok for someone to be cyberbullied

Questionnaire:

All 43 participants in the questionnaire stated 'No' when asked if they think it is ok for someone to be cyberbullied. All participants were asked to explain their answer. Participants all expressed similar

views on this topic. For example, participants suggested that it can affect an individual's mental health, upsetting, lower their self-esteem, unnecessary and just overall not a good thing (see appendices):

'' Absolutely not, it's a horrible thing to go through. You deserve the right to feel comfortable on social media without having someone tearing you down and bullying you for it''
(Anonymous participant)

'' No, because it will upset people and their self-esteem and mental health bad'' (Anonymous participant)

4.3.2. Results asking young people why they think someone might cyberbully another

Questionnaire:

43 participants all suggested reasonings why an individual may cyberbully another. By asking this question to the participants, young people expressed many views why cyberbullying may occur by claiming that it is due to fall outs, issues at home, insecurities and jealousy (See appendices):

''Because they are insecure about themselves so they pick on others to make themselves feel better'' (Anonymous participant)
''Because they are jealous or going through something themselves'' (Anonymous participant)

Focus group:

Similarly, to the questionnaire results, the young people who took part in the focus group also claimed similar views around jealousy, insecurities and issues at home (See appendices):

''Like a comping mechanism, they think it's easier to take it out on someone else''
(Participant 1)
They are jealous of them and maybe they are scared of you in real life so they do it behind the screen (Participant 7)

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4.3.3. Results when asking young people who they would feel most comfortable to talk to if experiencing cyberbullying.

During the questionnaire and focus group, young people were asked who they would feel most comfortable to talk to if they ever witnessed or experienced cyberbullying. The aim of this question was to evaluate who young people felt most comfortable to speak to when having concerns around cyberbullying. Evidently, young people expressed a range of different support circles (see appendices)

Questionnaire:

27 participants stated that they would speak to a family member, 17 participants stated friends and only 8 participants stated a teacher. Participants also highlighted youth workers and police (See appendices). Though one young person stated:

'No one, deal with it myself'' (anonymous participant)

Focus Group:

During the focus group discussion, young people also highlighted similar support such as friends, parents, police and youth workers (See appendices) But again, one young person claimed:

''Probably wouldn't tell anyone, it's quite embarrassing if your getting bullied'' (Participant 5).

4.3.5. Interview results from youth workers asking if they think the young people, they work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying

With data from the young people, it was interesting to gain data from youth workers perspectives on this topic. All 5 youth workers that were interviewed felt although young people are knowledgeable on cyberbullying by the youth centres providing workshops around cyberbullying and having informal chats during youth sessions. However, interestingly, Youth workers expressed that despite young people being knowledgeable, majority of the youth workers felt that the young people do not take cyberbullying seriously and understand the impact it has on individuals (see appendices):

"Unfortunately, I believe that cyberbullying happens a lot and despite young people being aware of it and how bad it can be some of them still partake in it (Youth worker 3)

" I think the young people I work with are very knowledgeable about cyber bullying, but also very good at not wanting to take responsibility for their actions about whether their behaviours class as bullying'' (Youth Worker 1)

4.3.6. Discussion and Analysis

From critically analysing the literature and gathering in-depth data on cyberbullying, it is clear that cyberbullying happens often and more frequently than we think. According to the literature, **O'Riley et al (2019)** found that social media provided an opportunity to negatively impact an individual's mental health. Likewise, **Naslund et la (2019**) highlighted that social media is a space for individuals to be easily exposed to cyberbullying. The data collected from young people living in Pembrokeshire found that all 43 young people who took part in the questionnaire stated that they were aware of what cyberbullying is, alongside 7 young people who took part in the focus group who shared the same responses **(see appendices).** However, during the interview with youth workers, the youth workers expressed that despite young people being aware of cyberbullying they felt that young people still ''partake in it'' (Youth worker 3). Though, despite youth workers highlighting this, during the questionnaire the young people were asked why they believe someone might cyberbully another. Maturely, majority of young people commented that cyberbullying occurs due to fall outs, issues at home and insecurities and jealousy (see appendices). **Myers and Cowie (2019, pp.2**) would agree that preparators of cyberbullying have often been bullied themselves and will often use social media to cyberbully an individual to ''fight back'' and due to their own insecurities. This suggests that young people during this study were aware of why cyberbullying may occur and young people were able to recognise that it could be due to personal reasons. However, this does not suggest that it is ok to be cyberbullied to cyberbully another.

Furthermore, the study examined young people's perspectives further by asking whether they though cyberbullying happens often or not. 35 out of 43 young people claimed that cyberbullying happens very often, only 4 young people felt that it does happen but not often and 4 young people were not sure (**figure 3).** It is clear from this data, despite it being a small scale of young people, that cyberbullying is prevalent within young people. This qualitative data links directly back to **The National**

Occupations Standards (2020) figure 1 that was mentioned in the literature review. The table identified that one in five young people was experiencing cyberbullying in 2020, with mention of the types of online bullying. Evidently, from analysing the literature and figure 1 in the literature review, cyberbullying can encourage psychological stresses, depression and lower self-esteem **(Baloch, 2020)** Linking the literature back to the data collected, it was clear that all 43 young people during the questionnaire and 7 young people during the focus group were able to acknowledge the affects and impacts that cyberbullying can have upon an individual. This was clear when young people highlighted those negative impacts such as: negative mental health, upsetting, unnecessary and overall, not good. One young person commented '' You deserve the right to feel comfortable on social media without having someone tearing you down and bullying you for I' (see appendices). However, Cassidy, **Faucher and Jackson (2018)** argues that to prevent cyberbullying from occurring it is important to educate young people on these impacts to prevent it from happening. Likewise, as mentioned in the literature, **Pearce et al (2011)** suggest that teachers and parents also need training/awareness around cyberbullying to help educate young people of the effects, which may prevent or lessen cyberbullying from occurring. However, despite the literature suggesting this, when asking the young people during the questionnaire 27 participants stated that they would speak to a family member, 17 participants said that they would talk with friends and only 8 participants would speak to a teacher regarding cyberbullying. Similarly, during the focus group, young people highlighted friends and parents as being the main people of support if experiencing cyberbullying. Therefore, this suggests that teachers are in need of more training/awareness to be able to educate and support the young people further as clearly the majority of young people who took part in this study did not feel that they could speak with their teachers as only 8 participants mentioned their teachers.

To further the research, it would be beneficial to gain teachers perspectives and first-hand experiences on cyberbullying and if they feel they get enough support/training to best educate their pupils.

4.4. Theme 4 – Peer Influences / Pressures

Peer influences/pressures have been one of the possible impacts of social media. As mentioned in the literature review, young people are often influenced and pressured into posting onto social media or taking part in 'trends' due to peer pressure and influences. Therefore, this theme was important to explore with the young people as it allowed the study to gain first-hand experiences on the topic, allowing the study to critically discuss and analyse the literature further.

Firstly, young people were asked if they have ever felt pressured to do something because of social media. Figure 4 below identifies that, 23 (53%) participants stated 'no' and 20 (47%) participants stated 'yes'. Evidently this result is close and it is important to explore this further.

Q25. HAVE YOU EVER FELT PRESSURED TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE YOU SAW IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Prefer not to say

0, 0%

No, 23, 53%

Yes, 20, 47%
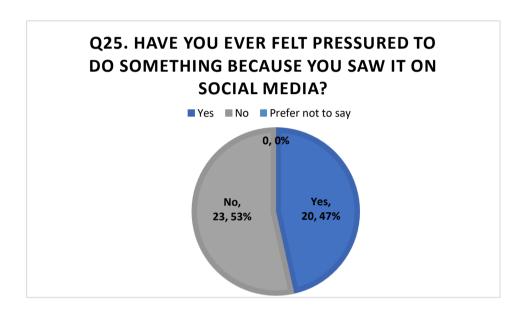
Figure 4: data showing if the young people have ever felt pressured to do something because they saw it on social media

4.4.1 Results to peer influences/pressures

Questionnaire:

To gain in-depth data, it was crucial to ask the young people who answered yes to figure 4 above (have you ever felt pressured to do something because you saw it on social media) why they felt this way. Therefore, asking the young people if they did it to try and 'fit in' was asked. 13 Young people expressed that they did it to try and 'fit in' and be similar to friends. Though, 8 participants stated that they did it as it seemed fun (see appendices):

''Not to fit in but because I felt like I was being left out'' (Anonymous participant)'

''Ye, wanted to do what my friends were doing'' (Anonymous participant)

Interviews:

It was interesting to gain youth workers perspectives on this question as they work with the young people 5 days a week. By asking the youth workers their opinion, the youth workers highlighted that young people often take part in trends/challenges online because their peers are or because it is the 'norm' (see appendices):

''TikTok trends are very common, whether this be a sprite challenge, dance trend or aesthetic trend. This is part of their daily lives'' (Youth Worker 1)

''For me this is a concern as young people spend a lot of time online and they are forming opinions and views on the world around them'' (Youth Worker 2)

This could be dangerous as there are trends such as "blue Whale" which we have seen venerable young people get involved in due to the influence of their pairs'' (Youth Worker 4)

4.4.2. Questionnaire results on getting likes on social media

Lastly, it was improtnant to ask the young people if they felt like they had to get lots of likes on social media to feel confident and worthy. Surprisingly, 32 participants stated no, with only 7 participants stating yes and 4 participants stating sometimes (see appendices).

'' Sometimes having more likes and followers makes people think that they are liked which can give someone more confidence'' (anonymous participant)
'' No, doesn't matter if no one likes you as long as you like yourself that is all you need'' (anonymous participant).

4.4.2. Discussion and Analysis

Gaining young people's honest thoughts and opinions regarding peer influences and pressures on social media has provided the study with interesting data. When analysing the literature, it was argued that young people look up to their peers and often get pressured and influenced to do certain things due to their peers. This was evident within the study carried with the young people, when 23 young people stated that they have never felt pressured by social media, whereas 20 young people stated yes. Sherman et al (2018) would suggest that this is due to young people needing to find their place in society and to act and behave in the environment that they are in. Furthermore, the literature suggests that the young people who felt pressured to do something due to social media will often do this to attempt to 'fit in' to what their peers are doing. However, when asking the young people this, it was

evident that only 13 participants said it was to 'fit in' and 8 participants said it was because they wanted to.

Another aspect of the literature that was explored with the young people was their perspectives and experiences on gaining likes and comments on social media. The literature argues that young people often feel although they need to get lots of likes in order to feel valued (Sandford and Quarmby, 2018). Though, when asking the young people this during the study, 32 participants claimed that they were not bothered by likes from social media and that they did not need likes to feel confident or worthy. Only a minority of 7 participants stated yes and only 4 participants said sometimes. When exploring this further, the young people who stated no claimed that it did not matter about likes, as long as you feel confident and like the content you post. With this data it is clear that the young people attending youth club in Pembrokeshire are able to understand the importance of self-acceptance. Pritchard et al (2021, pp. 77) claims that likes on social media content is a ''form of validation and measure of self-worth'' evidently, the majority of the young people who took part in the study do not need social media for validation or to improve their self-worth. However, to have further the research it would have been beneficial to have asked the young people who stated that they needed likes on content that they post, why they felt this way and if their thoughts were due feeling the need to protect and boost their self-esteem and wellbeing (Gallagher, 2017).

4.5. Theme 5 – Well-being

Lastly, the last theme explored was well-being. Well-being is an important aspect in an individual to feel positive and feeling good. As critically analysed in the literature review, young people during their youth are starting to compare themselves with friends and will start to shape their self-image **(Charoensukmonnkol, 2018)**. In addition, it was found that social media apps can have an influence on young people and can often encourage social comparison online **(Kennedy, 2019)**. Therefore, this theme was explored with the young people to examine the experiences young people have online and if it affects their well-being.

4.5.1. Results to comparing self to others

Questionnaires:

Evidently, as shown in figure 5 below, young people were asked if they ever compare themselves to others on social media. Results show that only 5 participants (12%) said ''all the time'', 11 participants

(25%) said ''never'', 15 participants (35%) claimed sometimes and 12 participants (28%) claimed not often.
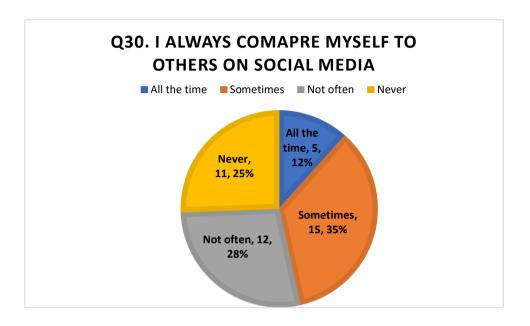

Figure 5: finding out if young people compare themselves to others on social media

Focus Group:

Likewise, all 7 participants were asked the same question and 6 participants said that they do compare themselves to others online, young people were also able to identify then negatives of this:

''Yeah, all of the time, but I think it just makes you feel worse cause people like, say Kim Kardashian has obviously had lots of surgery and all that so there's lots of pressures to look like them and it's not natural'' (Participant 1)
''Yeah, you try to be more like them but if it doesn't work it makes you feel really bad about yourself' (Participant 2).

4.5.2. Results to attention and approval on social media

Questionnaire

In addition, young people were asked if they felt that having attention and approval on social media increases their self-worth and self-value. Interestingly, 20 participants stated ''yes'' and 19 participants stated ''no'', with only 4 participants stating sometimes (See appendices).

'' Yeah, I feel that validation from others tends to help me with my self-image'' (anonymous participant)

'' Makes u feel more confident'' (anonymous participant)

''Depends who it is, if it's a close friends or mum and dad then yes, makes me feel happier'' *(anonymous participant)*

''No, I have my own self approval that's all that matters'' (*anonymous participant)*

Focus Group:

From collecting the data, 5 participants felt that if they did not get much attention and approval on social media then they would delete their pictures/post or worry that they do not have many friends. However, one young person spoke about self-worth and that if they want to do something they can regardless of what others think:

'' Yeah, cause might think you don't have many friends'' (Participant 3).

'' I have deleted photos for not getting lots of likes. I feel like if you don't get a lot, people look at it'' (Participant 2).

'' as long as you like the photo then I think its fine'' (Participant 5).

4.5.3. Discussion and Analysis

Lastly, the theme well-being was explored with the young people throughout the questionnaire and focus group. As found in the literature, Charoensukmongkol (2018) highlights that young people will start to shape their perceptions of self and will start to compare themselves to others. In addition, Kennedy (2019) also found similar results, arguing that social media apps allow young people to have the opportunity to compare themselves more frequently. By reviewing this literature, it was clear that social media can act as a negative influence on a young person's well-being. In addition, from analysing the data social media platforms can generate negative views of one's self and encourage young people to gain poorer self-image (Rodger and Rousseau, 2022). Despite the literature arguing this, it was crucial to ask the young people on their experiences. Surprisingly, it was clear that only 5 participants compare themselves 'all the time', 11 participants commented 'never', 15 participants stated 'sometimes' and 12 participants said 'not often'. In addition, 6 young people in the focus group said that they always compare themselves to others online. Young people identified the negative impacts that this could have upon young people. For example, bad mental health, pressures to look like others

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and feelings of doubt about themselves. Keels and Grealis (2020) would argue that this is because the young people have a lack of self-regulation and vulnerability. In addition, the literature would suggest that social media can portray negative and false content to make young people feel this way (Cingel et al, 2022). Therefore, from analysing the data it is evident that despite some of the young people comparing themselves to others on social media, it is also clear that the young people during this study are very knowledgeable in identifying the negative impacts social media can have upon well-being which was clearly identified above.

Despite the majority of young people feeling although they only 'sometimes' compare themselves to others online, interestingly 20 participants said 'yes' when asked if having attention and approval on social media increases their self-worth and self-value and 19 participants stated 'no'. Many young people expressed views that showed that they needed attention and approval to feel confident, validation and better self-image. Rodger and Rousseau (2022., pp. 289) would claim that the young people who feel that they need this attention and approval from social media will ''likely experience negative outcomes'' in the long term. In addition, Beyenes et al (2020) would imply that young people are likely to feel this way due to social media platforms being easily accessible to view a diverse range of individuals which can encourage negative impacts upon young people. For example, social comparison.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The main focus of this study was to evaluate if social media was doing young people any good, looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people. With the aims to gain view and perspectives from young people and youth workers by carrying out questionnaires, focus group and interviews. To carry out this study successfully, the study took on a qualitative study by using open-ended questionnaires, focus groups and interviews, with only a small proportion on quantitative methods (closed-ended questions). In addition, the study applied a TA approach to the study which enabled the research to generate codes and identify themes within the literature and data. Evidently, from analysing the data, social media has many negative impacts which young people have been able to successfully acknowledge, with only some positives. Below will identify some of the main findings:

In total, the study has gained first-hand experiences from 50 young people as well as 5 youth workers. Evidently, from carrying out the study, it is clear that social media has many negative impacts on young people. As mentioned in the study, these negative impacts faced by young people are cyberbullying, peer influences and pressures, sleep deprivation and well-being. These impacts, as argued in the literature, all play a part in many young people's lives and this is clear within Chapter 4: Findings, discussion and analysis when young people argued the effects social media can have. Similarly, the research suggests that social media has a negative impact on young people with researchers suggesting that it provides a space for young people to compare themselves (Charoensukmongkol, 2018), view false content (Cingel, et al, 2022) experience cyberbullying which can encourage psychological stresses, depression and lower self-esteem **(Baloch, 2020).** Understandably, when critically analysing the literature, it would be ok to suggest that social media is not a very safe nor fun place to be. However, from gaining the experiences from young people and youth workers, it is evident that the young people who took part in the study are very knowledgeable on the impacts of social media, as many of the participants were able to identify the negatives and provide understanding. For example, young people were able to identify how a young person may feel if being cyberbullied.

Therefore, despite social media having negative impacts, with young people being able to identify these impacts it could be argued that the young people who took part in the study may be able to overcome these potential challenges.

However, youth workers highlighted that despite the young people being knowledgeable, it has been found that the young people do sometimes partake in cyberbullying and use social media negatively. Therefore, a key recommendation to this would be to explore this further to gain more in-depth data, exploring why if they know the negative impacts of social media why they partake in it.

Furthermore, interestingly, the majority of the young people expressed pressures of social media and phones and claimed feelings of FOMO. This was identified when young people claimed that they did not turn their phones off at night, resulting in a lack of sleep. Young people expressed feeling of worry when suggesting that they did not turn their phones off in case of emergencies and feelings of anxieties as they are up on their phones on social medias (See appendices). This linked effectively back to the literature, as the literature highlights that young people are unable to relax at night due to the worry of missing out with an increase of anxieties (Sumen and Eygin, 2021).

In addition, the research identified that young people do not feel comfortable to talk to teachers regarding cyberbullying or negative experiences online. Young people identified that they are more likely to speak with family members or friends. Therefore, although this is still an advantage that young people can recognise support if needed, young people still should feel comfortable to talk to teachers as this is likely to occur during school. As mentioned in the literature, teachers are in a key position to gain training and should be supporting young people in relation to negative impacts on social media to attempt to prevent any negative experiences on social media (Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson, 2018).

It is important to take into account that the results are based on young people living in a rural area of Pembrokeshire and that evidently social media has more negative impact on young people than positive. For, future research it would be beneficial to explore teachers' perspectives and to gain their first-hand experiences, to identify whether they are given the opportunity to gain training around social media and young people or if they are given these opportunities, what they do to help young people who face these issues. In addition, to deepen the study, providing more in-depth interviews with the young people who experienced negative social media experiences would be beneficial and to ask the young people on their views what they wish to have changed about social media to make it a fun, safe and friendly environment for all. This would provide the opportunity for young people to be listened to, respected (UNCRC, 1989) and supported

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Chapter 7: Appendices

Ethics form removed for data protection

7.2. Questionnaire participation information form

Questionnaire looking at young peoples views and opinions on social media:

Research study title - 'Is social media doing young people any good? research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people'.

...

Participant Information Sheet

You have been invited to take part in a research study that is looking at if **Social media is doing young people any good and the possible impacts social media has on young people**. However, before you continue with the questionnaire, it is important that you are aware of the purpose of the study, who can take part in the study, what is involved in the study, confidentiality and what happens to your responses. Please take the next two minutes to read over these important sections before agreeing to take part in the study. If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to email me on 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk and I will be happy to assist you in any queries you may have. The questionnaire will not take you longer than 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to read this and on completing the questionnaire.

What is the purpose of the Study?

I am carrying out this study as part of my final year of my masters in Youth Work and Social Education. My study is focusing on whether social media is doing young people any good and looking at the possible impacts social media has upon young people. This questionnaire will help to piece together my dissertation, and the findings from your responses will help me to argue my research question.

Who can take part in the study?

Any young person aged 11-18can take part in this study. It is a voluntary and totally anonymous. However, if you have ever experienced a negative experience on social media and find it difficult to talk about then you do not have to participate. At the end of this information sheet there will be links to support services if needed.

if you wish to take part in the study then please be reassured that you have a right to withdraw at any point of the study with no explanation needed. You can even withdraw from the study after your responses have been submitted. Please email me on 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk with your unique number that you will of had to provide at the end of the study. Please note that if you wish to withdraw and provide me with your unique number, your details will not be anonymous to me anymore but your data will be securely removed right away.

What will the study entail?
Throughout the study you will be asked a range of questions. The first few questions will be asking general questions regarding age and gender. The questions will then be multiple choice questions, with some questions asking to rank our of 5 and some with texts to expand if wanted on your answers. The questions will be focused around social media, how social media may affect sleep, peer influences around social media, well being and cyberbullying.

Is the study confidential?
The whole study is confidential. To ensure that this is a safe study I have been given ethical approval from UWTSD Ethics Committee. All information if anonymous and will be kept securely. The study will not ask for personal details at any point, such as name or address. However, as mentioned earlier, if you do wish to withdraw after submitting the questionnaire then you will have to email me at 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk with your unique number. By doing this it will mean that I will be able to see what questions you answered. Though all your data will be deleted and I will ensure to remain confidentiality at all costs.

Ethics
The research will ensure to follow the the Data Protection Act (2018) as well as the Universities Code of Ethics and Research Standards and the EWC Code of Conduct. As mentioned previously, this will ensure that all data is secured safely, anonymous, and respecting the rights to withdraw. In addition, the project has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee at UWTSD and my supervisor Darren O'Connor.

1. By ticking yes, you are consenting to take part in the research study. If selected no, your participation in the study ends here.
On the next page you will be able to enter your unique code so that if you wish to withdraw at any stage you can by providing this unique code. *

○ Yes - I understand the purpose of the study and I wish to participate.

○ No - I do not want to participate in the study.

Next

7.2.1 Questionnaire questions

1. Please enter your uniqure number code below. By providing this number, if you wish to withdraw from the study after submitting the questionnaire you can. You can email me on 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk with this code. However, please be mindful that I will now be able to identify your answers to your name.
2. Unique number code (Please enter a code that you will remember)
3. What is youe gender? If other, please state. Male, Female, Prefer not to say, Other
4. How old are you? 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17,18

Social media:

5. Do you use social meida? Yes/No
6. If yes, how often would you say you use social media? Every single day Weekly, Monthly
7. Do you use social media to oclaise with family and friends? Yes/No
8. Do you feel pressured to have social media? On a scale of 0-10, 0 being not at all, 10 being very pressured
9. Would you rather go on social media or be outside socialising with family and friends? Enter your answer (open-ended question)
10. Do you get FOMO (Fear of missing out) if not on social media? If so, why?
11. What social media apps do you use the most? Snapchat, instagram, facebook, twitter, tiktokm whattsapp, other

Sleep deprivation

12. Do you often stay up all night on your phone? Yes most days, only some days, no, not at all
    Do you spend a lot of time afterschool/college on your phone? Yes most days, only some days, no,not at all
    Do you turn your phone off at night? Yes most days, only some days, no not at all

13. If stated no for 'Do you turn your phonr off at night', please expalin why? Enter your answer (open-ended question)
14. Do you find notifactions a distration when trying to sleep? Enter your answer

15. How much sleep would you say you get per night? Between 2-4 hours, between 5-7 hours, between 8-10 hours, between 11-13 hours, more than 13 hours.
16. If you get less than 10 hours sleep, would you say this affects your mood the nextday? If yes, pelase explain. (open-ended question)

Cyberbullying

17. Are you aware of hat cyberbullying is? Yes/No
18. Have you ever witnessed or been a vitcim of cyberbullying? If yes, how do you think this might make an individual feel or how did it make you feel? Enter your answer (open-ended question)
19. Why do you think a person may cyberbully another? Enter your answer (open-ended question)
20. Do you think cyberbullying happens often? Yes, very often, not often at all, not sure
21. Do you think it is ok for somone to be cyberbullied? Please explain your answer (open-ended question)
22. If you, or someone you knew, was being cyberbullies, who would you feel most confortable to talk to? (No right or wrong answer) (open-ended question)
23. Are you aware of support services for victims of cyberbulying? Yes/No
24. If stated yes in previous questions, please state support servcies that you are aware of

Peer infleucnes / pressures

25. Have you ever felt pressured to do something because you saw it on social media? (For example, have you ever felt pressured to take part in tiktok trends or to play acertain game because your friends/family or social media infleucnes do it? (no right or wrong answer) Yes, No, Prefer not to say
26. If answered yes, did you do it to try and 'fit in' to what your peer/infleucnes are doing? (no right or wrong answer) (open-ended question)
27. Do you think it is good to feel pressured into things because of social media? Please explain your thoughts and feelings (No right or wrong answer) (open-ended question)
28. Does having attention and approval on social media increase your self-worth and self-value? If yes, why do you feel this way? (No right or wrong answer) (open-ended question)
29. Do you feel like you have to get lots of 'likes' or 'follows' on social media to feel confident and worthy? If yes, do you think this is because of peer infleucnes? (No right or wrong answers) (open-ended question)

Well-being

30. I always compare myself to others on social media. All the time, sometimes, not often, never
31. Do you ever OR have you ever used social media to attempt to improve your well-being? (No right or wrong answer) yes, no, prefer not to say
32. If answered yes, what social media sites or apps did/do you use to improve your wellbeing and did/does this help? Enter your answer(open-ended question)
33. If answered no, what did/do you do instead to improve your wellbeing? Enter your answer(open-ended question)

34. Overall, do you feel social meida is positive or negative experience? Enter your answer (open-ended question)

Thank you so much for reading and carrying out the questionnaire. Your responses and participation in the study will really help my research

7.2.2. Questionnaire open-ended coded results

l Media

1. Would you rather go on social media or be outside socialising with family and friends?

Highlight Code – Green (both), Yellow (outside socialising), Orange (social media)
26 participants stated – outside (yellow highlight)
9 participants stated – social media
8 participants stated – both (green highlight)

Would you rather go on social media or be outside socialising with family and friends?
Be out with friends with my phone
Be outside with friends as long as have my phone
Doing stuff with family
Both
Depends , if rubbish day on phone
go outside socialising
No
I like to do both
Freinds
See family and friends
I like to do both
Outside socialising but others don't really want to
Be on social media
Be on social media at home
rather be outside
Outside socialising
Outside
Outside
Social media, more fun

Outside
Be in person socialising
Be outside
Friends
Outside with friends
Be outside with my best friend
Be outside with family and friends more healthy
Be outside
Be outside , firstly I like being outside and dont really like being on screen
See, my friends
Be outside
Social media
I would be on both because I need fresh air
Both
Outside
On social media at home
Socialising with family and friends
Outside with friends
be on social media talking with friends
I would usually go out with friends but I live in quite a rural area so I like the fact that I can talk to them easily
Social media
Go outside
Be outside then go on my phone
Outside

2. Do you get FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) if not on social media? If so, why?

18 participants stated - yes (pink highlight)
22 participants stated – No (yellow highlight)
3 participants stated sometimes / a bit (blue highlight)

Do you get FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) if not on social media? If so, why?
Yeah cause I feel empty and lonely
Yeah, because everyone else is talking to people and I'm not
Yes, because everyone else has it and there's a group chat everyone is in but me

No

No,

yes because everything happens on social media

Yes because I can't see who's out

No

Sometimes

Kind of, my friends have Instagram And I don't so ifeel like I'm missing out

Abit

Yes coz if there's a trend going on or some gossip or information mainly from tik tok you won't know about it

No never

Yes sometimes, if I'm not on social media I worry I'm missing out on new posts,TikTok's

absolutely, feel as though i'm being left behind and missing out on certain things

No

Not really but yeah at the same time because everyone uses it

Yes, I don't like being alone

No

No not really

Yes because everyone posts and if I don't look I will miss out on my friends updates in their lives

No not at all

No

No

If a cool event is happening online

Don't feel like I'm missing out just feel left out

No

A little bit, everyone is doing stuff with each others and I cant really

No

Not really cause I could be having fun if I was on call

No never

Sometimes

Yes because I am at home

No because I'm not bothered

Yeah as if I'm not on my phone I'm worried I am missing what my friends are doing like in group chats

Not really

No

yeah cos my friends might be on something im not

Not really, I have pretty much every media platform

No never felt like this

No

Yeah, being left out

No

3. Overall, do you feel social media is a positive or negative experience?

18 participants stated - both (highlighted yellow)
14 participants stated – positive (highlighted orange)
10 participants stated – negative (highlighted blue)
1 participant stated – neither (highlighted red)

Overall, do you feel social media is a positive or negative experience?

Both, cause you get confidence but there can be mean people on there

Both, can be good to make people feel better and bad cause propel can be bullies

Both

Goodthing

I think it is a goodthing, I like it

negative but i don't think i could live without it

Both

Well it can be both

Sometimes it's a good thing sometimes not

Can be dangerous cause never know if one day may do something wrong

Both

Negative

Good

I think it can be a positive place if people used it right but it can also be a very very negative place

id say negative, i love it and i wouldn't stop using it, but it has no real benefit to me.
i think it paints a negative picture to younger people and shows unrealistic stereotypes
which makes people think they have to change the way the look or act. it has changed me to
think more about the way i look and dress and that i need likes to feel comfortable with myself,
but realistically it all means nothing

Social media can be both positive and negative. Positives are you can communicate with
friends and family and reach out to them. But on the other hand it can be negative too because some peo
on social media can be nasty. It's also full of trends that people may feel the need to join in
on to keep up and impress other people.

Both, depending on how others look at it but mainly negative

Negative

Positivie, speakto friedns and family

It bring a positive and a negative side

Negative mostly

Good thing, cause you can chat with friends and as,if you want to go and play with them .

Bad because people can get bullied

Positive

Positive,can be good things todo and can be bad things like cyber bullying

Good because you can make friends online , but bad if someone is cyber bullying

Both. Someeopelspend too much time but some people do actually go out which of good

Depends what you're usIng it for. Good thing if you're like wanting to watch dancing videos but bad thing if you're doing the wrong stuff with violence and swearing and stuff

Bad thing, cause if wasnt invented there wouldn't be as many mean people and people wouldn't Be as sad

Both

Good, spread good news quicker

In between so both

It is a positive experience because u learn new things

Yes cause you cam speak to friends, no cause you can get bullied

Positive

Negative really because you see loads of n stuff on there tjay probably isn't real and you spend loads of time on it but can be a good thing if want to talk to friends

Social media is a negative experience because you are constantly comparing your bad self to someone's good self and that lowers your self esteem

In the middle

negative people always compare themselves

Defo positive as you don't have to communicate through things like postcards or smoke signals

Positive ,

Nethier

Both

Both cause even if it's good to meet new people it's bad for people to get bullied and viewing your stuff wrong and telling you what to do and being rude and innapropraite

Sleep Deprivation

1. If stated no for ''Do you turn your phone off at night'' please explain why?

If stated no for "Do you turn your phone off at night" , please explain why?
Watch Netflix to go to bed
Put it on sleep mode so don't get notifications but still on
Just in case I get a phone call

Cause I'm on it
Because it's the weekend and I stay up later
Because I need it for my alarm
If I'm tired I will turn my phone off
Just in case if there was an emergency
I put do not disturb on
Need alarm to go off in morning and in case someone calls me in emergency
FaceTiming friends all night
Always keep it on because I use it for a alarm and in case I miss important messages
i tend to check messages from certain people, or my brain won't shut off so i just scroll through instagram and tiktok
Because I use my phone for an alarm
I don't because I don't want to
Because I am on it all night
No as I need it for alarms and just in case someone needs to contact me in the night
I listen to podcasts to fall asleep to
No because I might miss important messages
I do
Only turn phone off on weekends, during the week I need it for alarm for school
Friends might text meat night
Cause it keeps me entertained at nigth
Cause I'm on FaceTime
Because in case someone is in a emergency
Use for my alarm
Cba
Because sometimes I am on it but also cause I use it for alarm
N/a
cos im on it
In case I receive an important message or call
Feel tempted to watch loads of videos and stay up all night until like 1 : 30 am
Charge
Because my friends are messaging me and I want to be nosy

2. Do you find notifications a distraction when trying to sleep?

26 participants stated – no (highlighted yellow)
15 participants stated – yes (highlighted green)

2 participants stated – sometimes (highlighted red)

Do you find notifications a distraction when trying to sleep?
No, phones on silent
No see above
Yes
Yes, because friends messaging
Well I'm usually the one messaging them so not really
yeah they can be
No
No
No because I'm a deep sleeper
No
No
Yes I put my phone on silent
No don't hear them
Sometimes if I'm trying to sleep and then it goes off
sometimes
No because my phone is on silent at night
Yes
Yes
No
No
No because I turn my phone on do not disturb
No because you have downtime, from 8-7am can't hear anything on phone
No
Don't ofnd it distracting as it is on night mode
Depends if it is on silent or not. If not silent then yeah when I, trying to get to sleep
Yeh
No,cause I put my phone on silent
No as phone is downstairs and off
No
No
No, as on silent
Yes because I try to go to sleep
Yes
YES
Yeh
No I just turn my phone on silent
Yeah but I put it on silent
ye always pining

Nope I'm used to it
No
Nah cuz i can check in morning
Yeah
No

3. If you get less than 10 hours sleep, would you say this affects your mood the next day?

17 participants stated – no (highlighted red)
23 participants stated – yes
2 participants stated – sometimes
1 didn't reply (highlighted grey)

If you get less than 10 hours sleep, would you say this affects your mood the next day? If yes, please explain
No i feel fine
..
Yes sometimes on weekends
Oh yeah Moody
Fine in morning
yes i get more pissed off without sleep
Not really
I'm happy
Yes because I don't want to get up for school if I'm tired
Kind of moody
Not really
Yes I don't want to wake up in the morning
No
Yes sometimes makes me feel tired the next morning and not motivated
not really, i'm able to get by with little sleep
Sometimes
Yes sometimes
Yes sometimes I fell moody
No
Yes
Yes I need 8+ hours to feel like I have energy. If I don't I really notice my stamina for the day and tolerance for work and people will decline

Feel good
No
I feel grumpy sometimes if I go to bed late and don't get enough sleep
If I get 8 hours I can get grumpy the next day
As soon as wake up I feel grumpy
Grumpy in morning cause I have school
N/a
No
Not really
No I don't feel grumpy
Yes I get grumpy at my parents and brothers
Moody in morning
Yes because im tired
Yeh I can be grumpy in the morning
I would be more tired but it doesn't really affect my mood that much
No
yeh im mostly moody
No
Only tired
Yes
A little bit not much
Sometimes , feels me upset as get angry at people for no reason

Cyberbullying

1. Have you ever witnessed or been a victim of cyberbullying? If yes, how do you think this might make an individual feel or how did it make you feel?

22 participants stated – yes (highlighted green)
21 participants stated – no (highlighted yellow)

Have you ever witnessed or been a victim of cyberbullying? If yes, how do you think this might make an individual feel or how did it make you feel?
Yes been a victim so not scared cause behind screen
Yeah, felt fine because , well it upsets you but didn't give a big impact cause it's not in person and most of time it's not someone I know

The group were all arguing

No, makes them sad and disappointed

Yes, makes the,feel horrible

hurtful

Yes my friends felt upset

Yeah

No

Upset and feel left out

Yes very sad

Yes, very angry and not want to go to school next day to argue

No, depressed and sad

Yes I have, it's not nice and makes you feel like everyone is against you

no

No

Can make someone feel worthless and very unhappy

My old friends have message me rude things about me

No

No

I can imagine it feeling extremely isolating and scary

No Never

Yes it might make someone sad

Yeah witnesses, made them sad

Made me feel sad

Yeah, didn't feel very good

No

No, sad lonely

No, makes them sad though probably

No,but might feelsad

No but someone might feel sad and not good

I have not seen anyone get cyberbullied but I might make them feel really sad and emotional

No

No no

Yeah might make someone feel sad and lonely

No

No

yeah made them not happy

Yes I have seen it, but the individual didn't really care as the cyber bullies were very unpopular in real life

Never witnessed , someone might feel anxious to go on social media again

Never and if it happened to me I'll call the police

Yeah, ,ales themcupset and sad

Yeah, think might make the, feel anxious and unsafe online

Why do you think a person may cyberbully another?
Cause they think they can tell people what to do
Cause they feel like they are better than them
Because they are jealous or going through something themselves
Cause they jealous
Maybe I real life they have problems and too scared to say on real life
because it easier to say it online then face to face
Because they are moody and want drama
Fall outs
Because they have problems
Jealousy and look for targets
Maybe there jealous of the person
Angry and need to get something off their chest or they have just been brought up with no discipline so are bullies and horrible people
Cause their jealous
Because they are not nice people, trying to make others feel down because they might be down
insecurities, problems at home, may be due to behavioural issues
Jealously
Because they're just not a nice person in general or they might have stuff going on behind closed doors
Maybe
Because their bullies and sad, Lonley
Because there jealous of what that other person has that they don't maybe
To make themselves feel like they have power as that person attacking another may feel powerless or they may have had it done to them and feel like they want to retaliate
Because they have issues at home
Because they might have a disability
Cause they are mean and angry and want to take it out on others
Cause they are mean , angry or sad and taking it out on you
To make themselves feel better
Not sure
Problems at home
Maybe they don't like them
Cause of their looks or anything
Cause their jealous and selfish
Because they might have said something that the other person might not like
To get there enjoyment
Because they are bored and a loser
Because they have stuff going on
Because they are insecure about themselves so they pick on others to make themselves feel better
To feel better about themselves

cos they have stuff going on
If they are too scared to say it in person
Maybe have a hard life at home so take it out on others
Jealousy
Because of what they said or done or just a bully
People who cyberbully do it because they are expressing their feelings in not such a nice way and taking their feelings out on someone else

2. Do you think it is ok for someone to be cyberbullied?

42 participants stated - no (highlighted red)
1 participant stated – depends (highlighted yellow)

Do you think it is ok for someone to be cyberbullied? Please explain answer
No, cause it's horrible. If you're defending yourself there is a doffeeemce
No, because it will upset people and their self esteem and mental health bad
No because its not nice
No, cause people don't need to be bullied
No,cause it might make them feel so bad
no, no type of bulling is right
No because it makes you upset
No because it makes them upset
No because it might really upset another person
No, cause it's really wrong and makes people feelings hurt and don't now what others are going through
No it's not okay
Nope cyber bullying should be a crime it can lead to depression and suicide etc
No, cause trying to do something that's not good
No , it's unfair to others
absolutely not, it's a horrible thing to go through. you deserve the right to feel comfortable on social media without having someone tearing you down and bullying you for it
No, it's not okay for someone to be cyberbullied. No one deserves to be put through that.
No it's not okay at all, people should never make people feel unhappy
No it is mean
No, because it's not nice
No it can really effect someone's mental health
Not at all. It's extremely unnecessary and should not be tolerated
No,

No because it's not right

No,cause it could hurt their feelings and make them upset and ruin their day

No, cause don't want to it happen to people or me

No,not very nice we only live once

No,might make them feel different and depressed

No, it's just not nice to feel unwanted and sad

No, cause ithey shouldn't be don't it

No, cause it's just not

No, just not good

No because it is horrible and it might make people emotional

No because it could effect people's health

No because they might become depressed

No cause it's not fair

No because that person has feelings and it's not good at all for it to go
unnoticed especially because it's harder to know if someone is being bullied online

No because it is bad

no not nice for someone

No, not nice

No it's not because they might kill them self's

No, not nice at all

No, because I don't think it is ok for anyone to be bullied
especially online it not very nice and can give you depressing

It depends what they do, let's say the 'victim' has done something a lot worse (like attacked the bullies dog

3. If you, or someone you knew, was being cyberbullied, who would you feel most comfortable to talk to? (participants stated more than one)

27 participants stated – family (highlighted green)
17 participants stated – friends (highlighted yellow)
8 participants stated – teacher (highlighted pink)
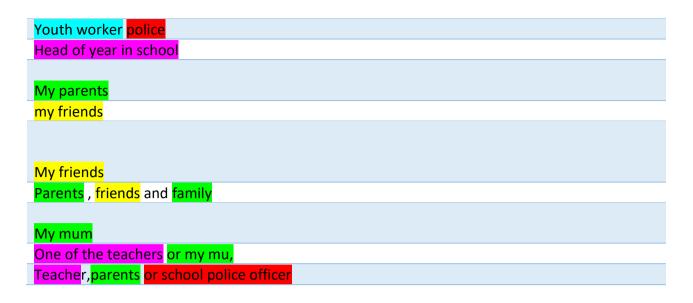**5 participants stated – youth workers (highlighted blue)**
3 participants stated – police (highlighted red)
3 participants stated – deal with it themselves (highlighted grey)

1 participant stated – school counsellor (highlighted dark blue)
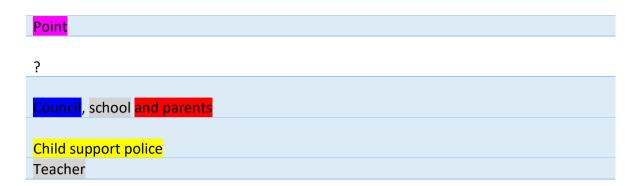
If you, or someone you knew, was being cyberbullied, who would you feel most comfortable to talk to? (No right or wrong answer)
Friends , sister
Friends,staff at youth club and maybe my mu, depending on my mood
N/a
My friends
My mum
point staff
My friends and sisters
My friends and family
Teachers parents
School Counsellor , friends , teachers
Mum
Probably my friend
Parents , boyfriend , point
probably talk to a friend
my friends
Family or friends
My mum
No one
The police , parents or guardian
Yess
friends or a teacher that best connects with that person
Family friends teachers and youth workers
Adults
Parents or grownups
My mum
Mum and some of frIends
No one, deal with it myself
Teacher, parents
Parents of guardians
Parent or guardian
Parents
I would find the person and talk to them what happened
I would talk to my friends
I would beat the flip out of them!

Youth worker police
Head of year in school
My parents
my friends
My friends
Parents , friends and family
My mum
One of the teachers or my mu,
Teacher,parents or school police officer

4. Please state support services that you are aware of

19 participants answered this

25 participants stated – not sure or did not answer

8 participants stated – police (highlighted yellow)

5 participants stated – youth club (highlighted pink)

3 participants stated – parents (highlighted red)

2 participants stated – ChildLine (highlighted green)

2 participants stated – school (highlighted grey)

1 participant stated – themselves (highlighted blue)

1 participant stated – council (highlighted dark blue)

If stated yes in the previous question, please state support services that you aware of
Police
Police
Point
Child line
Police
Point youth
Point
The police
Being alone
Youth services
Police mum or dad
Police
Parents ,someone that you know
Police ,childlins

Point

?

Council, school and parents

Child support police
Teacher

Peer Influences/Pressures

1. if answered yes, did you do it to try and 'fit in' to what your peers/influences are doing?

22 participants either answered no for previous question or was not sure (highlighted grey)
13 participants stated – yes (highlighted pink)
8 particiapnts stated – no (highlighted blue)

If answered yes, did you do it to try and 'fit in' to what your peers/influences are doing? (No right or wrong answer)
Wanted to feel how it felt to do it
Not to fit in but because I felt like I was being left out
No
No, just do it for fun
yeah
No it was a fun trend
Yes
Yeah
Idk
Yeah
I try but fail

I did it because it was catchy and I wanted to put my own spin on the trend

Not to fit in but just makes me want to play the game as looks cool

No but if I see a good game online that others have it makes me want to play it but not pressured

I tried to but it went wrong and someone posted it on social media

Sometimes I can't say no

YeH

N/a

ye, wanted to do what my friends were doing

No it genuinely seemed fun too

Idcif I'm different

Yeah

2. Do you think it is good to feel pressured into things because of social media?

36 participants stated - no (highlighted orange)
7 participants stated – yes (highlighted yellow)

Do you think it is good to feel pressured into things because of social media? Please explain your though
No, cause you should be yourself
No, cause everyone should be their own self and unique
No

No , just not good

No, if you feel pressured you might see something really bad and do it

no it can be quite a dangerous thing sometimes

No

No they can't control you

No I don't think it is

Kind of to try fit in and not feel left out

No

No it's bad someone should be happy regardless of social media like the olden
days lol the world would be so much better without social media and smartphones

No, jutno mot good

No we should be ourselves

to be honest i'm not really sure. i don't think feeling pressured is particularly good, but
then it pressures you to step out of your comfort zone and try something new so there's a good and a bad

Social media can often influence people into joining trends etc. a lot of people feel pressured
to keep up with trends. I don't think it is good, because it can cause a lot of stress on an individual
to keep up with these 'trends'

No it's not good

This show that people have done it before so you don't need to be scared

No , if you don't want To do something you shouldn't do it

No not really it should influence you to do fun thing no things your uncomfortable with

No unless it's for a good cause as I think so is media does have the ability to change peoples actions for the

No, because if you are pressured to do something by someone people would feel pressured and it is really

No you do not have to do something you don't feel like doing

No, can get them into bad things

Depends what it is.like so,Eli,wants it's good to feel pressure but if your being told to do something
stupid then don't feel pressured , just don't do it

No, cause it could end up bad

No, because you might not want to do it

No, you don't need to be putting your life into it, more things to life

No, not sure

Depends what it is. If it's good thighs like sport or being kind but not if it is bad stuff

No, cause it's just not good

No because it makes me feel anxious

No

No because if u don't wanna do it u don't have to

No it isn't but it's easy to be pressured

No because you should just be yourself

No

not really should do it cause you want to

Wellbeing

1. Does having attention and approval on social media increase your self-worth and self-value? If yes, why do you feel this way?

20 participants stated – yes (highlighted pink)
19 participants stated – no (highlighted green)
4 participants stated – kind of/sometimes (highlighted yellow)

Does having attention and approval on social media increase your self-worth and self-value? If yes, why do you feel this way? (No right or wrong answer)
Yes, cause you you know people will like you and will encourage you
Yeah, cause then I know people like me
Yes if people are being nice
Doesn't really matter if you get attention or not
Yeah only if it was my friend
yes because more people know u
Yes because you can see who likes you
Yeah
Some people think it dose
Yeah, cause giving nice compliments made me happier
No because people might joke about you
Not really social media is fake
Yeah cause feel good
Ye sometimes if feeling low and you post a picture that you like and get attention from it , it can make you feel better
yeah, i feel that validation from others tends to help me with my self image

No

No, I have my own self approval that's all that matters

It depends what social media tells you to do

No, don't make it better

Yes it builds my confidence

No. The ability to turn your likes off (people can't see how many likes you have) has helped with this

No

Some times

Yeah,

Not really

No I don't post anything

Depends who it is, if it's a close friends or mum and dad then yes , makes,e feel happier

Suppose it could but can have no affects

Yes,cause you're not bored and feelhappier

Not really just cause they don't really know you properly

No,

It kind of does because I get more people to be nice to me

No

No bruv

YeH if loads of people message me o feel like I'm liked

Not too sure but mostly no because I don't care if I don't get any likes if I do post but
 if I get loads it's like I'm famous

No

ye but shoudlnt cause should be yourself

Yes, then I have more to talk about

No,

Makes u feel more confident

No it doesn't

No, cause even though you have tiktok , if you had lots of people on social media you don't know
 them and they don't know you, and doesn't mean anything if you have loads of followers and don't
 need folllowea to embrace who you are

2. Do you feel like you have to get lots of 'likes' or 'follows' on social media to feel confident and worthy? If yes, do you think this is because of peer pressure? (No right or wrong answer)

32 participants stated – no (highlighted green)
7 participants stated – yes (highlighted pink)
4 participants stated – sometimes (highlighted yellow)

Do you feel like you have to get lots of 'likes' or 'follows' on social media to feel confident and worthy? I
No, your true friends will stick by you
No cause I don't post anything
No
No, cause you don't have to
No, I just don't post anything
yes
No
No because that Doesent bother me
No
Yea, cause if you want to be famous you need the follows
Nooooooo
No again it's all fake
No, be you
Sometimes having more likes and followers makes people think that they are liked which can give someone more confidence
sometimes. i see my friends who have a lot of likes and when i don't i think "well why not me?" it can be a bit disheartening. i don't think it's because of peer pressure, for me it's wanting to be liked i thi
No
No
Yes
No,you don't have to
No
Not followers but if I post a picture and I don't get as many likes as I usually do I think to myself why?
No,
Sometimes
No, doesn't matter if no one likes you as long as you like yourself that is all youneed
No, cause don't care what others think and I can just talk to my friends
Yeah some people think having lots of likes makes them feel better
Yeah, cause I have over 1000 followers on my tik tok,makes me feel good
No
Sometimes depending on what the likes and follows are for
Yeah, cause it can make people happy,especially if you want to become someone famous on like tiktok
No, don't need them, believe in yourself
Not really because I don't post anything on social media

No
No because I'll feel less confident
No
No because I don't wanna be known for having loads of likes
No
yeah because want to have same likes as friends
Not really but I wouldn't know because I get thousands of likes
No,
No
No, because it's nervosing having loads of follows or people watching
No, see above

3. If answered yes, what social media sites or apps did/do you use to improve your well being and did/does this help?

26 participants stated apps such as Instagram, WhatsApp, snapchat and TikTok help

If answered yes, what social media sites or apps did/do you use to improve your well being and did/doe
TIk too and Snapchat , has helped cause friends support me
Snapchat and Spotify, talk to friends on Snapchat and music is great
Tiktok Snapchat helped made me feel happier and can talk with my friends and watch funny things
All of them , tiktok, Snapchat, Facebook ,make me happier . Or I just talk with my mum to make ,happier. But would rather hang out with my friends to feel better
Snapchat, tik tok ,iTunes yes
I'm happy
Snapchat tiktok
Snapchat , triller (watch videos) , they help
Tiktok
Tik tok
Looked inspirational videos on tik tok

i didn't

Whenever I feel low, I often find myself on tik tok as some of the content on there is funny and cheers me

Nothing

Tik tok for advice pages or seeing if people feel the same as I do for certain
situations including physical health problems

Play on games to cheer myself up

Tick tok YouTube

Watched video on YouTube to cheer me up ashes nice and calming.

Roblox ,made me feel happier

Tiktok , snapchat , YouTube

Tik tok,YouTube and makes me relaxed

Instagram,and tiktok, makes me feel happy

Snapchat, tik tok,helped me feel better

Tik tok snapchat and insta

Snapchat to text people how I feel

Tiktok makes me happier cause funny videos

N/a

tiktok, instagram

None

Tim tok, YouTube, Snapchat , Facebook . Watch funny videos

Mincraft

Tiktok and Snapchat , help a little

Usually use WhatsApp to chat with friends and like to connect with family over messenger and tiktok

4. If answered no to previous question, what did/do you do instead to improve your well-being.

14 participants stated other things that they do to help their well-being that is not social media

If answered no, what did/do you do instead to improve your well-being?
Draw
Stay off social media probably as social media only shows happy things rather than realistic, probably go for a walk or meet a friend
gym, exercise, walk my dog, football
Have time to myself and do what makes me happy
Hockey
Go to point
Spoke to my family
Listen to music, read books and write stories
Eat
Go gym
Go outside for a jog or kick a football about
Spend time with friends
Working out
Nah
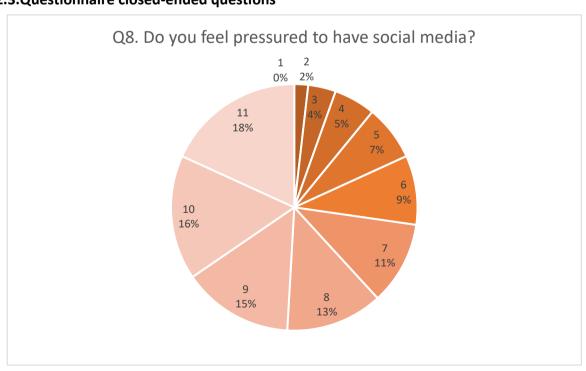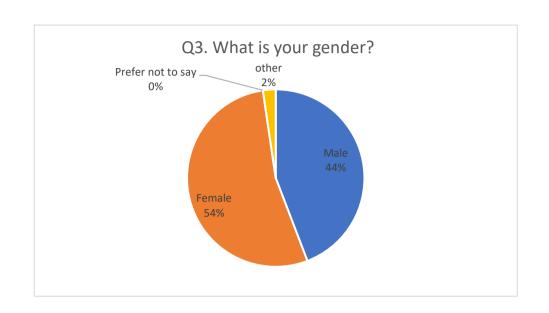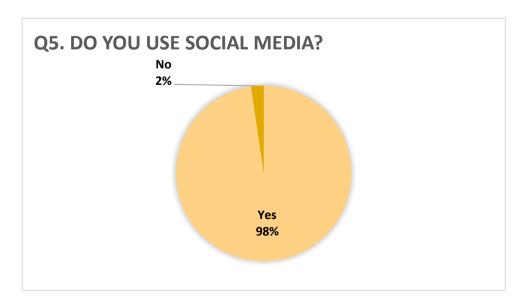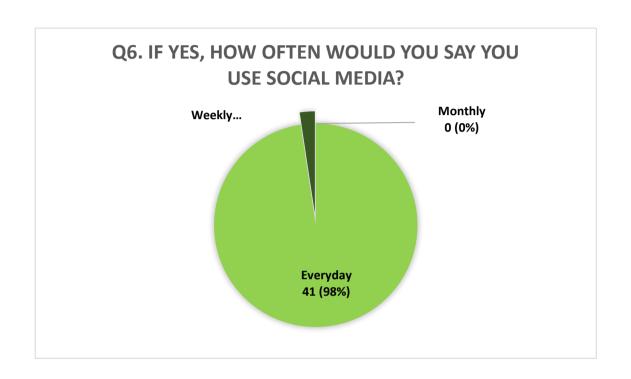
7.2.3.Questionnaire closed-ended questions

Q3. What is your gender?

- Prefer not to say 0%
- other 2%
- Male 44%
- Female 54%

Q4. How old are you?

Age	Count
11-12 yrs	18
13-14 yrs	16
15-16 yrs	1
17-18 yrs	8

Q5. DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

- No 2%
- Yes 98%

Q6. IF YES, HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Weekly…

Monthly
0 (0%)

Everyday
41 (98%)

Q7. Do you use social media to socialise with family and friends?

45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0

Yes   No

■ Series1

WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA APPS DO YOU USE THE MOST?

■ Snapchat ■ Instagram ■ Facebook ■ Twiter ■ TikTok ■ WhattsApp ■ Other

8
(6%)

26
(19%)

37
(26%)

Q15. How much sleep would you say you get per night?

- 13+ 0%
- 11-13 hours 9%
- 2-4 hours 12%
- 8-10 hours 35%
- 5-7 hours 44%

Q17. Are you aware of what cyberbullying is?

- No 0%
- Yes 100%

20. Do you think cyberbullying happens often?

Legend: No sure | Not often at all | Yes, very often

Q23. Are you aware of support services for victims of cyberbullying?

Yes 40%
No 60%

Q25. HAVE YOU EVER FELT PRESSURED TO DO SOMETHING BECAUSE YOU SAW IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Legend: Yes | No | Prefer not to say

0, 0%
20, 47%
23, 53%

Q30. I ALWAYSCOMAPRE MYSELF TO OTHERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

■ All the time ■ Sometimes ▨ Not often ■ Never

All the time, 5, 12%

Never, 11, 25%

Sometime…

Not often, 12, 28%

Do you ever OR have you ever used social media to attempt to improve your well-being?

Prefer not to say
5%

No
30%

Yes
65%

7.3. Focus Group consent form

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:
Participant Identification Number:

FFURFLEN GANIATÂD CYFRANOGIAD	PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Teitl Y Prosiect: / Project Title: **Is social media doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people.**
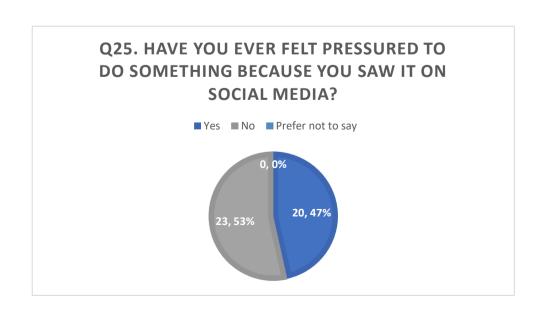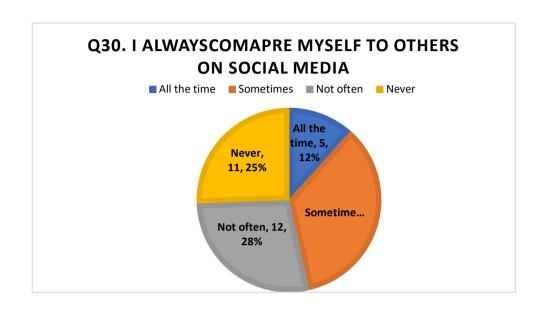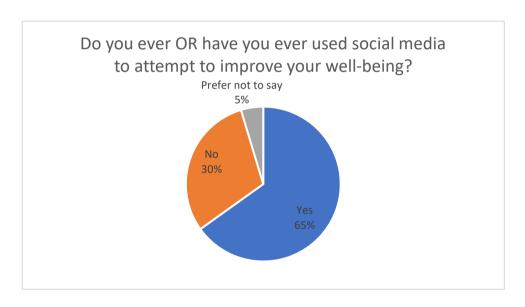
Dear Participant:
My name is Zoe Aylward and I am studying my Masters in Youth Work and Social Education

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. This project is looking at the impacts of social media on young people and aims to address whether social media is doing young people any good

Through your participation in the focus group, I hope to discover the impacts of social media. For example, views on cyberbullying, peer pressures on social media, wellbeing and sleep deprivation due to social media usage. I believe your thoughts, feelings and opinions will be very helpful in my research.

The focus group will be voice recorded to ensure that I am able to transcribe the groups thoughts, feelings and opinions accurately, this will save time during the focus group as I will not need to write. Once the voice recording has been transcribed, it will be deleted and no longer accessible. If you wish to not have the focus group voice recorded then please state below and I will ensure to write all views and opinions down on the day and no voice recording will be done.

The focus group will be completely confidential and will follow the Data Protection Act (2018) as well as following the Universities Code of Ethics and Research Standards and the EWC Code of Conduct. Your name will not be used within the study and you will remain anonymous.

This gives you an opportunity to anonymously express your views and opinions of social media and still be able to make a great difference to the research study.

The focus group will take around 30-60 minutes, but it will not be rushed and it will flow accordingly to the number of participants and views/opinions.

Once the focus group is over and the research study is completed, you will be able to access the findings at your request. The results from this focus group will optimistically increase my knowledge and understanding around the impacts of social media and if social media is doing young people any good. The research will be stored on the Universities One Drive, which is safe and secure. The results and research study is also shared with my Supervisor.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any point if you no longer wish to take part.

I thank you in advance for taking time to read this and in your participation in taking part in the focus group. If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me at 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Kind regards,
Zoe Aylward

I give consent for _____ to take part in the focus group which will benefit the research study ''Is social media doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people''.

I give consent for the focus group to be voice recorded and to be used for transcription purposes only.

Yes   /   No

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any stage

Yes /   No

I understand that my name will not be visible during the study and that my name will be anonymised. For example, participant 1

Yes   /   No

I am aware and give consent that my answers will be used for the study and shared with Zoe's supervisor

Yes   /   No

7.3.1 Focus Coded Group Transcript

Transcript from Focus Group – 29th March 2023

Interviewer – Zoe Kate Aylward (Researcher)

Interviewees – Young People from youth club

Date and Time – Wednesday 29th April 2023 – 4pm

Location – POINT Youth Centre

Researcher – Do you all use social media?

Participant 1 – Yeah, every day

Participant 2 – Yeah

Participant 3 – Yeah

Participant 4 – Yeah, every night

Participant 5 – Yeah

Participant 6 – Yeah, every day

Participant 7 – Yeah

Researcher – Do you think there are pressures around social media?

Participant 7 – yeah

Participant 5 – no not really

Participant 7 – wait no I don't

Participant 4 – No, cause im just using it to relax and stuff

Participant 6 – yeah

Participant 1 – Yeah cause like the rest of society has got it and trying to blend in.

Participant 2 – and you get judged if you don't have a certain app, they'll be like 'why haven't you got that app'.

Participant 3 – Yeah, I feel like what is posted on social media you got to, like if you don't look like a certain person or act a certain way then it's just too much.

Participant 1 - And if your friends are doing TikTok's and you don't want to be in it they call you boring or something.

Participant 3 – Yeah they make you feel bad if your not wanting to do it or something

Participant 2 – Yeah if you're doing it wrong or something

Researcher – Do you guys find yourselves up late at night because you feel like there is pressure?

Participant 5 – yeah all the time

Participant 2 – Yeah I am on TikTok every night

Participant 3 – oh I'm up till like half 4

Participant 6 – Yeah

Participant 1– Yeah, you feel like there is nothing else to do at night so you just go on your phone but you don't realise how long you're on it for, I find I don't get much sleep then at night

Participant 4 – Yeah , till like half 2

Participant 7 – yeah

Researcher – Do notifications play a part in this? Keeping you up and being on your phone?

Participant 1 – Yeah because it pings and your intrigued as to what and who it is

Participant 3 – Yeah, I don't even go to bed till like 2-3 in the morning because I can't sleep so I go on my phone, like I'm on my phone till the point I can't keep my eyes open anymore and I have to go to bed

Participant 6 – yeah cause you have to check them you know

Participant 4 – no cause my phone is on silent all the time

Participant 2 – 'didn't answer'

Participant 5 – yeah and it might be important so keep me up on my phone

Participant 7 – and what happens if someone is dying you know, you have to check. I miss out if I don't check

Researcher – Because you are on your phones till late at night do you find your grumpy and tired the next morning?

Participant 3 – Yeah, I don't go to school till like 10am

Participants 1 and 2 – yeah

Participant 4 – no

Participant 5 – no

Participant 7 – yeah

Participant 6 – no

Researcher – Do you all know what cyberbullying is?

Participant 2- Yeah I think it is happening more now than it was last year, younger people are getting phones and my brother got one when he was like 10 I think and I didn't even ger my first phone till I was 13. They probs have them early to fit in with everyone else

Participant 1 – Yeah there is more pressure now and not cool if you don't have a phone. I think just because you are over a screen it doesn't make it ok and like social media when you stay stuff over it people read texts differently like if you put a full stop you either take it that you are being like a bit like sarcy or your just trying to get your point across. End up arguing and maybe send messages that are nasty but wasn't trying to be nasty.

Participant 3 – Yeah like when you read a message you interpret it in your brain. You read it how like the other person might have sent it to you but then you read it and it's like different and you read it out in your head and its different to what they might have said and that can cause a argument

Participant 4 – online bullying that happens a lot

Participant 5 – harassment online

Participant 6 – people don't leave people alone online

Participant 7 – it's a horrible thing which happens on games online and apps

Researcher – Really interesting, why do you think that someone might cyberbully someone?

Participant 5 – Because they are jealous

Participant 7 – Yeah, they are jealous of them and maybe they are scared of you in real life so they do it behind the screen.

Participant 3 – Because of how they are feeling at their home

Participant 1 – Yeah, I agree and maybe because they are insecure and they feel like everyone else needs to feel insecure

Participant 6 – Yeah insecure and its easier behind the screen isn't it

Participant 2 – So to make themselves feel better

Participant 1 – Yeah, like a comping mechanism, they think its easier to take it out on someone else

Participant 2 – Or they are used to it at home so they think it Is normal and they don't think that its that bad

Participant 4 – Or they are annoying

Researcher – Yeah they are some very good points raised, so if you were aware of cyberbullying happening who do you think that you would talk to or any support services?

Participant 1 – My parents

Participant 2 – Probably my mum maybe

Participant 3 – Friends

Participant 4 – POINT or Childline

Participant 5 – Probably wouldn't tell anyone, its quiet embarrassing if your getting bullied

Participant 6 – Just would bully them back, stand your ground

Participant 7 – call the police on them straight away

Researcher – Do you find there are pressures around getting lots of likes and follows on social media and is it a good thing?

Participant 2 – I have deleted photos for not getting lots of likes. I feel like if you don't get a lot, people look at it

Participant 3 – Yeah cause might think you don't have many friends

Participant 2 – Yeah!

Participant 1 – I would delete comment if commented nasty stuff

Participant 2 – I would just take it down

Participant 5 – But as long as you like the photo then I think its fine.

Participant 6 – I don't know, I think it's quite embarrassing to post anyway

Participant 4 – yeah but more young people

Participant 7 – No, because I don't really care cause I haven't posted in like a year

Participant 1 – yeah if you don't get any comments you have to delete It

Researcher – Because of this do you ever compare yourselves to others on social media like influencers?

Participant 5 – yeah all the time

Participant 1 – Yeah you try to be more like them but if it doesn't work it makes you feel really bad about yourself

Participant 7 – well I wish I looked like angela tate

Participant 4 – I wish I looked like ryan Reynolds

Participant 2 – Yeah all of the time, but I think it just makes you feel worse cause people like, say kim Kardashian has obviously had lots of surgery and all that so there's lots of pressures to look like them and its not natural

Participant 6 – 'Didn't reply'

Participant 3 – Yeah it's really unrealistic

Researcher – So if you feel like that, do you ever use social media to try and attempt to improve your wellbeing?

Participant 1 – Yeah tik tok mostly, sometimes thought depends what you watch

Participant 4 – yeah

Participant 7 – ye by watching tiktok

Participant 6 – yeah same just chill

Participant 2 – Yeah but I go on tiktok and mines really depressing

Participant 5 – I watch Netflix

Participant 3 – Haha yeah and me

Participant 1 – That's why you got to google funny videos like try not to laugh

Researcher – Would you rather be outside then to make you feel better or inside on social media?

Participant 3 – Inside!

Participant 5 – home

Participant 1 – Yeah inside, just easier don't have to make effort whereas you can just sit in your house and still like talk with each other.

Participant 2 – Inside

Participant 6 – if it was the summer then hanging out but if it is the winter then inside on my phone

Participant 7 – I would rather be with friends, actually, depends sometimes I just want to be at home

Participant 4 – 'did not answer'

Researcher - Do you think social media is a good or a bad thing?

Participant 2 – Bit of both,

Participant 6 – yeah bit of both, bad thing if people post photos with filters on and can make other people jealous of what they look like and then they can hate themselves

Participant 7- using filers to hide themselves up

Participant 1 – Yeah, I think it depends on like the context like in which way you are looking at It

Participant 3 – I think good, because you get to go on it

Participant 2 - <mark>Depends on how it is used. Like you can watch videos and talk to your friends but then also comes with all the bad stuff with it like people you don't know trying to talk to you or people being mean and nasty to you over text or sending inappropriate pictures.</mark>

Participant 5 – good for distraction

Participant 5 – good for distraction

7.4. Interview Information Sheet

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

Rhif Adnabod Cyfranogwr:
Participant Identification Number:

FFURFLEN GANIATÂD CYFRANOGIAD	PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Teitl Y Prosiect: / Project Title: **Is social media doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people.**

Dear Participant:

My name is Zoe Aylward and I am studying my Masters in Youth Work and Social Education

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. This project is looking at the impacts of social media on young people and aims to address whether social media is doing young people any good

Through your participation, I hope to discover the impacts of social media. For example, views on cyberbullying, peer pressures on social media, wellbeing, and sleep deprivation due to social media usage. I believe your thoughts, feelings and opinions will be very helpful in my research.

During the interview, I will write your answers down exactly how you answer them and will allow you to read over the answers you give after the interview to ensure that I gained all correct answers and information. This will be an opportunity for you to either expand on your answers if you wish, and to confirm the information is correct OR to have the opportunity to withdraw.

Your answers during the interview will be completely confidential your name will not be visible. Your name will be anonymised during the study. For example, Youth Worker 1. The interview will follow the Data Protection Act (2018) as well as following the Universities Code of Ethics and Research Standards and the EWC Code of Conduct. Your name will not be used within the study and you will

remain anonymous. This gives you an opportunity to anonymously express your views and opinions of social media and still be able to make a great difference to the research study.

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes but it will not be rushed and it will flow accordingly.

Once the interview is over and the research study is completed, you will be able to access the findings at your request. The results from this interview will optimistically increase my knowledge and understanding around the impacts of social media and if social media is doing young people any good. The research will be stored on the Universities One Drive, which is safe and secure. The results and research study are also shared with my supervisor.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any point if you no longer wish to take part.

I thank you in advance for taking time to read this and in your participation in taking part in the interview. If you have any further queries, please feel free to contact me at 1800431@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Kind regards,
Zoe Aylward

I give consent to take part in the study which will benefit the research study ''Is social media doing young people any good? A research study looking at the possible impacts of social media on young people''.

Yes   /   No

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any stage

Yes /   No

I understand that my name will not be visible during the study and that my name will be anonymised. For example, 'Youth Worker 1''

Yes   /   No

I am aware and give consent that my answers will be used for the study and shared with Zoe's supervisor
Yes   /   No

7.4.1. Interview coded transcript

Code Table:

==Social media==

==Sleep Deprivation==

==Cyberbullying==

==Peer Influences/Pressures==

==Well-Being==

Interview 1 – 14th March 2023 9-10am

Interviewer - Do you think that young people are pressured into being on social media? Please explain views

Youth Worker 1 - In today's society, there is both positive and negative pressure to use social media. If you go online to google the menu for a place to eat, more often than not, you are directed to a business's social media page to view this, this is also relevant for opening times of businesses and information about the place they are looking at. This in itself puts pressure on young people having social media. I would say 90% of businesses now have a 'check us out on social media' buttons on their websites

Also in the era of influencers, if you want to keep up to date with your favourite celebrity news etc then you have to follow them on social media. ==Young people are also pressured to have certain social medias as a communication tool with their friends==. My daughter is 11 and is not allowed snap chat, however the majority of her friends only use this platform as a communication tool so ==she feels that she is left out== as I will not allow her to have it. ==Her peers often put pressure on her to download the app so they can communicate.==

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'Trends' which occur on social media also put pressure on young people to have social media as if you aren't 'up to date' with current trends it can isolate you from conversations, dances which their peers may be talking about.

In my job I have also seen passive aggressive bullying from young people to other young people who are not allowed social media and they are considered 'weird' or have over protective parents – thus excluding them from their peers. Young people also thrive on 'likes' and views.

Interviewer - What apps do you think are most prevalent in young people nowadays?

Youth Worker 1 - Snap-chat, TikTok, Instagram

Interviewer - From working and spending a lot of time with young people, do you think that young people are spending a lot of their time at night on social media?

Youth Worker 1 - Yes, young people often say that they are up late as they were just scrolling through TikTok or communicating with their friends on snap chat. If an argument is happening as we often see on Snap-Chat, young people tend to stay up later involving themselves in these argument, or even staying up late worrying about the repercussions of what's happened on social media. So, although they may not actually be on it, the impact of social media can keep young people up at night

Interviewer - Research suggests that young people spending a lot of time at night on their phones can increase negative attitudes and moods the next day. What is your opinion on this? Do you see this often?

Youth Worker 1 - We see young people after school the majority of the time, so they are often tired from having a busy day. However, if there has been an issue on social media the night before, this can often filter into our youth centre the next day and present in negative attitudes. We used to hear of young people being tired because they were up at night watching Netflix, but now more often than not it is due to social media usage whether it be conversations or just simply scrolling which I do think impacts them the next day as they are not getting adequate time sleeping and resting.

Interviewer - Do you believe that the young people you work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying and do you think it is common within the young people?

Youth Worker 1 - I think the young people I work with are very knowledgeable about cyber bullying, but also very good at not wanting to take responsibility for their actions about whether their behaviours class as bullying. They are able to identify in others behaviour if someone is being mean to someone else online, however sometimes when they are challenged on their actions online, they are unable to see that it is bullying or negative and that they were just sticking up for themselves and see not fault in their actions or words. Cyber bullying is a very common occurrence and I would say happens on a daily basis in some shape or form.

Interviewer - Do the young people who attend the youth centre speak to you guys (staff members) for support around cyberbullying or does this not occur often?

Youth Worker 1 The young people we work with often come to us about issues that have occurred online. In some instances, this has resulted in us advising parents and young people to contact the police.

Informal conversations around cyber bullying happen on a weekly basis. We also have conversations with parents who are after advice on the cyber bullying which their child/ren are experiencing

Interviewer - Does the youth centre/club offer support for young people around social media (if being cyberbullied etc) and are the young people aware of this?

Youth Worker 1 - We always offer support to young people on any issues that they may be experiencing. We also have good links with the local schools and PCSO if the incidents need signposting. Young people are aware of the support we can offer them and we also run a confidential counselling service which the young people can access. We often run bullying workshops around anti bullying week and ask the young people to take part in these activities

Interviewer - Do you often hear young people involved in conversations online that lead to arguments or cyberbullying behaviours? (For example, young people in group chats arguing with one another)

Youth Worker 1 - Group chat arguments are so common with our young people and young people are very open about sharing these conversations with us. As mentioned above, young people are very competent at recognising bullying behaviours to others and against them but are sometimes almost unwilling to recognise bullying behaviours in themselves when they take part in cyber bullying and almost turn a blind eye to their behaviour.

Young people argue online about the smallest things and instead of using positive communication will just 'go at' each other, in group chat scenarios it almost becomes a game to them. Young people will also involve themselves in arguments that have nothing to do with them, just so they are involved in the 'drama'

Interviewer - How often do you see or hear of young people taking part on online 'trends' because their peers or influences are doing so?

Youth Worker 1 - TikTok trends are very common, whether this be a sprite challenge, dance trend or aesthetic trend. This is part of their daily lives

Interviewer - Based on the young people you have worked with or are currently working with, what is your opinion on social media on young people and do you think it is a positives or negative experience for young people?

Youth Worker 1 - social media can be such a useful tool to communicate with young people and can give us an extra tool to support them. Support networks like KOOTH, C.A.L.L etc are vital support tools for young people and without social media and internet it possibly could have an impact on young people seeking support.

On the flip side of this, social media is often un monitored and can lead to young people being bullied online and too scared to report it. The young people also have no interest in having their profiles private and focus so much on how many followers or 'friends' they have which we have seen to lead in the past to young people being groomed.

Young people also thrive off likes and views and will post provocative pictures, videos etc to get reactions from people. We often see young people 'slag off' others for posting certain things, but will then post it themselves but with an excuse that its ok for them to do it because XYZ.

Social media feeds young people, I think they feel they have to be on it to know what's going on all the time with their friends and peers. A big case of FOMO happens when they have their phones taken off them by their parents.

Personally, I cannot answer if social media is a positive or negative for young people. I think if used responsibly and young people are emotionally intelligent then it can be very positive, but on the flip side, it is so addictive and often without re-percussions for behaviours that are displayed online that young people can become absolutely vile to each other.

Interview 2 – 14th March 2023 11-12pm

Interviewer - Do you think that young people are pressured into being on social media? Please explain views

Youth Worker 2 - I feel young people are pressured into being on social media. There is pressure within friendship groups to have a mobile phone and then to install social media apps onto the phone. I feel the pressure does not come from parents/guardians or professionals working with young people it comes from their peers.

Interviewer - What apps do you think are most prevalent in young people nowadays?

Youth Worker 2 - Young people seem to use apps that give instant responses such as Instagram, TikTok and You Tube.

Interviewer - From working and spending a lot of time with young people, do you think that young people are spending a lot of their time at night on social media?

Youth Worker 2 - Yes, young people during youth club sessions and youth projects attend to their phone a lot. They communicate in-group chats and are open about the amount of time they spend on social media apps.

Interviewer - Research suggests that young people spending a lot of time at night on their phones can increase negative attitudes and moods the next day. What is your opinion on this? Do you see this often?

Youth Worker 2 - I have witnessed young people who are tired and have responded this is because they have been on their phone late at night. I feel this is affecting their sleep, which is not allowing them to get the rest they need during their adolescent years. If they observe something that upsets them, they do not have the opportunity to talk this through with a family member, friend or professionals, as they are alone at night.

Interviewer - Do you believe that the young people you work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying and do you think it is common within the young people?

Youth Worker 2 - I think young people do understand cyberbullying and are taught it in youth provisions and schools. However, link bullying this does not stop it happening and I feel cyberbullying is common within friendship groups, particularly group chats.

Interviewer - Do the young people who attend the youth centre speak to you guys (staff members) for support around cyberbullying or does this not occur often?

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Youth Worker 2 - Young people do speak to Youth Workers about cyberbullying and this often this is done through informal chats/discussions. They do not seek support often but I have observed young people talking about bullying issues online.

Interviewer - Does the youth centre/club offer support for young people around social media (if being cyberbullied etc) and are the young people aware of this?

Youth Worker 2 - The youth centre does not offer support specifically around cyberbullying. The approach is we try to offer support & guidance on any issues facing young people. We aim to make young people aware that they can talk to a youth worker if they have anything that is worrying them. We celebrate Internet Safety Day every year and use this as a platform to have healthy debates and discussions around Cyberbullying.

Interviewer - Do you often hear young people involved in conversations online that lead to arguments or cyberbullying behaviours? (For example, young people in group chats arguing with one another)

Youth Worker 2 - I have on numerous occasions heard young people discuss issues within group chats and offered advice on how to do deal with the situation. Being removed from a group chat is upsetting for young people and often this leads to arguments and disappointment.

Interviewer - How often do you see or hear of young people taking part on online 'trends' because their peers or influences are doing so?

Youth Worker 2 - I'm seeing more and more young people talk about You Tube and TikTok influencers with pretty strong views, for example misogynist beliefs. For me this is a concern as young people spend a lot of time online and they are forming opinions and views on the world around them. On the contrary, it can be hugely beneficial for example, I've known young people to learn to play a music instrument through being taught on You Tube.

Interviewer - Based on the young people you have worked with or are currently working with, what is your opinion on social media on young people and do you think it is a positives or negative experience for young people?

Youth Worker 2 - I personally believe used in the right way it has many benefits. Young people can stay connected with friends, celebrate achievements, learn about current issues easily, and be influenced by positive people. However, it can also make young people very reliant on technology,

not connect, and learn in the environment they are in. I often see young people distracted by their devices and instead of engaging conversation with the people in the room, turn to their phones. I worry about the competitiveness and the need to look perfect online and they need to have likes/followers. This for me is adding extra pressure to young people.

Interview 3 – 14th March 2023 2-3pm

Interviewer - Do you think that young people are pressured into being on social media? Please explain views

Youth Worker 3 - yes, I think there is a social pressure on young people to be involved in social media its used as a main tool of communication by young people and also there is a pressure to stay up to date with current trends that are set by social media.

Interviewer - What apps do you think are most prevalent in young people nowadays? –

Youth Worker 3 - snapchat, TikTok and Instagram

Interviewer - From working and spending a lot of time with young people, do you think that young people are spending a lot of their time at night on social media?

Youth Worker 3 - I have overheard conversations from young people about how they had been up all-night chatting on social medias

Interviewer - Research suggests that young people spending a lot of time at night on their phones can increase negative attitudes and moods the next day. What is your opinion on this? Do you see this often?

Youth Worker 3 - I believe that the connection to negative mood is due to lack of sleep which can be attributed to having been on social media the night before. I'm not convinced that if a young person not on their phone stays up to the same time as some on, I'm their phone that they wouldn't show an increase in negative attitudes and moods the following day.

Interviewer - Do you believe that the young people you work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying and do you think it is common within the young people?

Youth Worker 3 - I believe most young people are aware of cyberbullying. Unfortunately, I believe that cyberbullying happens a lot and despite young people being aware of it and how bad it can be

some of them still partake in it whether that is down to herd mentality or not I'm not sure but often they don't realise that the actions they take towards others online are exactly what they pinpoint as being bulling when asked.

Interviewer - Do the young people who attend the youth centre speak to you guys (staff members) for support around cyberbullying or does this not occur often?

Youth Worker 3 - the young people often talk about times they have had arguments/disagreements with other young people on social medias and ask for advice as to what to do.

Interviewer - Does the youth centre/club offer support for young people around social media (if being cyberbullied etc) and are the young people aware of this?

Youth Worker 3- there is support within the centre for young people experiencing cyberbullying there are leaflets and posters dotted about and the staff are always there if needed but I don't often think the young people take heed of the posters/leaflets, they do however speak to staff

Interviewer - Do you often hear young people involved in conversations online that lead to arguments or cyberbullying behaviours? (For example, young people in group chats arguing with one another)

Youth Worker 3 - yes, all the time it often feels though there is a new argument each week

Interviewer - How often do you see or hear of young people taking part on online 'trends' because their peers or influences are doing so?

Youth Worker 3 - TikTok trends and things of the same will appear to be on the rise young people are always talking about the new dance or craze that they have seen someone do on social media which they then try to emulate. these 'trends' are nothing new however as there was always some form of footwear or clothing that you had to have and young people would be placed under pressure to have that thing but with social media it is more instant and available for people to see and find out about so the pressures are more constant plus due to social media the trends change rapidly so it is harder to keep up to date on what the right trend to be doing is at any one given time.

Interviewer - Based on the young people you have worked with or are currently working with, what is your opinion on social media on young people and do you think it is a positives or negative experience for young people?

Youth Worker 3 - I personally struggle to find any real positives to social media, I think that there are some social medias that are vile and put far too much pressure on young people to look or act a certain way. The biggest issue with social media in my opinion is that there is no release from it too is on 24 hours a day there is nothing stopping anyone from messaging you weather you are friends or not and due to the scrolling nature and instantness of the apps it is highly addictive. Social medias do make it easier to stay in contact with friends who have moved away or that you haven't seen for a while but I feel like that is a positive that is closer connected to the older generation than that of young people still in schools etc.

Interview 4 – 21ˢᵗ March 2023 1:30-2:30pm

Interviewer - Do you think that young people are pressured into being on social media? Please explain views

Youth Worker 4 - Absolutely, I think it's becoming more common to see younger children and babies being given tablets to watch their favourite programme or play silly games on and I think it stems from this. By introducing technology that allows them access to different platforms at a young age makes them more inclined to join social media when they are older. Especially if a young person who hasn't grown up with technology see's their friends have access to platforms such as snapchat, Facebook e.g., it puts pressure for them to "fit in" and be on these apps as well.

Interviewer - What apps do you think are most prevalent in young people nowadays?

Youth Worker 4 - Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, Be Real

Interviewer - From working and spending a lot of time with young people, do you think that young people are spending a lot of their time at night on social media?

Youth Worker 4 - From working in different youth clubs in the evenings with young people you defiantly see the use of a mobile phone more when they do attend. However, that's only a few young

people you do still get young people that don't go on their phones during the session and want to engage with activities we provide.

Interviewer - Research suggests that young people spending a lot of time at night on their phones can increase negative attitudes and moods the next day. What is your opinion on this? Do you see this often?

Youth Worker 4 - Yes, you can see a young person's change in mood if they have been up all night on their phone. I have worked with a young person whose screen time for the week was over 100 hours which was crazy. You could tell that they haven't had much sleep and they had just been watching TikTok all night. But I think this is a common trend amongst many young people in today's society as they can't switch off from social media if its constantly around them.

Interviewer - Do you believe that the young people you work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying and do you think it is common within the young people?

Youth Worker 4 - I think it's definitely more common now days than it was 10 years ago and I think young people have adapted and don't really understand cyberbullying as well as they should. With bullying in school, you can see the signs and have someone to turn to such as a teacher e.g., however when a young person is getting bullied through the use of social media, they tend to keep it to themselves as it could be happing whilst they are at home at night. I think it could be promoted more too young people on what they can do if they are being bullied online and by creating relationships with youth workers, they can feel safe to talk about these issues.

Interviewer - Do the young people who attend the youth centre speak to you guys (staff members) for support around cyberbullying or does this not occur often?

Youth Worker 4 - I have had young people in the past seek support for online bullying as they did not know what to do and I offered advice and support to them however I wouldn't say it's a common topic that young people speak about.

Interviewer - Does the youth centre/club offer support for young people around social media (if being cyberbullied etc) and are the young people aware of this?

Youth Worker 4 - If young people disclose that they are involved in online bullying we offer support and report it to the correct people so they can have extra support. I think we provide a safe space for young people where they know that they can speak to a youth worker if they have any issues.

Interviewer - Do you often hear young people involved in conversations online that lead to arguments or cyberbullying behaviours? (For example, young people in group chats arguing with one another)

Youth Worker 4 - Yes all of the time, I think it happens more as they usually make group chats with entire year groups in. For example, Year 7 Group chat, they will add everyone from that year into a snapchat group and if one person argues on it everyone knows about it.

Interviewer - How often do you see or hear of young people taking part on online 'trends' because their peers or influences are doing so?

Youth Worker 4 - I see a lot of young people up to date with the current trends online such as clothing, dances, games and apps. In some cases, it can be harmless to keep on top of the trend for example mullets came back into fashion and we saw a lot of young people changing their hairstyles to match the trend. Although I think this could be dangerous as there are trends such as "blue Whale" which we have seen venerable young people get involved in due to the influence of their pairs.

Interviewer - Based on the young people you have worked with or are currently working with, what is your opinion on social media on young people and do you think it is a positives or negative experience for young people?

Youth Worker 4 - I think with the current young people I am working with you can see a negative impact social media has caused on them which then leads to mental health issues amongst young people. This is becoming an issue as you can't monitor everything on social media as it is such a wide spread platform and for a young person it can be a scary place for them and something such as cyberbullying could really affect them. There have been some incidents in Pembrokeshire where young people have been bullied online which sadly led to some young people committing suicide. Sadly, this is becoming more common due to the signs online being easier to miss especially as the more traditional ways we work with young people is face to face. I believe for it to become a better place for young people we should be adapting the way we work to better support young people online and create that safe environment for them on social media.

Interview 5 – 24th March 2-3pm

Interviewer - Do you think that young people are pressured into being on social media? Please explain views

Youth Worker 5 - Yes, I think there is a lot of pressure for young people to be on social media. A lot of socialising is done online and a lot of what they watch and listen to is on social media. Young people can be left feeling out of the loop if they aren't on social media.

Interviewer - What apps do you think are most prevalent in young people nowadays?

Youth Worker 5 - Snap chat, TikTok, Instagram.

Interviewer - From working and spending a lot of time with young people, do you think that young people are spending a lot of their time at night on social media?

Youth Worker 5 - Yes young people tell us they are on social media at night and sometimes not sleeping properly due to this.

Interviewer - Research suggests that young people spending a lot of time at night on their phones can increase negative attitudes and moods the next day. What is your opinion on this? Do you see this often?

Youth Worker 5 - Yes see a lot of young people struggling in the day with being exhausted and can be moody due to this.

Interviewer - Do you believe that the young people you work with are knowledgeable on cyberbullying and do you think it Is common within the young people?

Youth Worker 5 - Young people are all aware of cyberbullying with most experiencing it.

Interviewer - Do the young people who attend the youth centre speak to you guys (staff members) for support around cyberbullying or does this not occur often?

Youth Worker 5 - Young people often talk to us about their experiences of cyberbullying.

Interviewer - Does the youth centre/club offer support for young people around social media (if being cyberbullied etc) and are the young people aware of this?

Youth Worker 5 - The youth centre we work at support and advice.

Interviewer - Do you often hear young people involved in conversations online that lead to arguments or cyberbullying behaviours? (For example, young people in group chats arguing with one another)

Youth Worker 5 - Regularly there is a lot of drama going on.

Interviewer - How often do you see or hear of young people taking part on online 'trends' because their peers or influences are doing so?

Youth Worker 5 - Young people often try the new trends on social media from buying expensive drinks to doing the lasted TikTok craze.

Interviewer - Based on the young people you have worked with or are currently working with, what is your opinion on social media on young people and do you think it is a positives or negative experience for young people?

Youth Worker 5 - There are positives and negatives for young people on social media using it safely is the key and feeling ok to come of it or block someone when bullying is happening.

7.6. Loco Parentis Consent Letter

Removed for data protection

From: Lewis, Steve <Steve.Lewis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2023 7:33:00 PM
To: Zoe Aylward <Zoeaylward15@outlook.com>
Subject: RE: Dissertation

Hi Zoe, I've looked over the questions and feel they are suitable for young people to answer during an open-access Youth Club session. I'm happy to act as their local parentis for this questionnaire.

Kind Regards,

Steve Lewis
Senior Community Youth Worker / Uwch Weithiwr Ieuenctid Cymunedol
Pembrokeshire Youth Service / Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Sir Benfro

Mobile / Ffôn Symudol: 07825 365150
E-mail / E-bost: steve.lewis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk
Facebook- https://m.facebook.com/HaverfordwestYouth

7.7. Thematic Analysis Coding Table