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Submission Title: **Educational Reinforcement Against the Social MEDIA Hyperconnectivity Among Students [ERASMEDIAH]**

Keywords: Social Media Hyperconnectivity, Digital Well-being, Youth Education, Educational Interventions

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Problem

Social media hyperconnectivity, defined as the excessive need to stay online and spend prolonged time on digital devices, has become a serious issue in today's world. Research in Europe indicates that over 70% of young people spend more than 3 hours daily on social media, with this duration steadily increasing (Statista, 2022). Social media hyperconnectivity negatively affects students, leading to distractions, decreased motivation for learning, and a decline in academic performance (Zhao & Zhou, 2022). Additionally, constant online engagement exacerbates mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and burnout among young people and disrupts their sleep patterns (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). These effects not only harm their cognitive functions but also negatively impact their physical health (Carter et al., 2016). Therefore, comprehensive strategies and interventions are urgently needed to mitigate the negative effects of social media hyperconnectivity and promote healthy use of digital tools among young people.

Educational programs and awareness campaigns have emerged as crucial tools to combat the negative effects of social media hyperconnectivity, particularly among adolescents. Research shows that interventions focusing on digital literacy and time management skills are among the most effective strategies. For example, a study by Gök and Kara (2021) examined a digital well-being program implemented in secondary schools, which significantly reduced the participants' daily social media usage by an average of 30%. Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted by Moreno et al. (2020) found that structured educational programs emphasizing mindfulness and self-

regulation improved students' ability to control their online activities and reduced symptoms of anxiety and stress caused by excessive social media use. Another noteworthy study by Singh et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of parental involvement in awareness campaigns, demonstrating that collaborative approaches between schools and families can create a more sustainable impact in reducing hyperconnectivity-related behaviors.

Despite these positive outcomes, the effectiveness of such interventions often depends on their cultural and contextual relevance, as well as the long-term engagement of participants. Studies suggest that programs tailored to specific age groups and delivered in engaging formats, such as gamified learning or peer-to-peer workshops, tend to yield better results. Furthermore, a lack of follow-up support after program completion remains a significant limitation in many initiatives (Mills & Henley, 2022). Therefore, while existing programs have shown promise, there is a growing need for comprehensive, scalable, and culturally sensitive interventions to address social media hyperconnectivity more effectively.

This paper aligns with the objectives of the ERASMEDIAH project, which aims to equip youth workers and educators with tools to address the risks of social media hyperconnectivity among young people. Sharing the project's insights provides an opportunity to highlight scalable and culturally relevant interventions to address these risks across diverse educational contexts in Europe.

Aim

This study aims to provide a data-driven foundation for understanding the risks associated with social media hyperconnectivity among young people and developing effective educational and awareness programs to address these risks. To achieve this aim, the study seeks to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the perceptions and experiences related to social media hyperconnectivity's impact on young people across different European countries?
2. How effective are the current strategies implemented by youth workers and educators in mitigating the negative effects of social media hyperconnectivity?
3. How should educational programs against social media hyperconnectivity be adapted to different age groups and cultural contexts?

Methodology

This study is based on the quantitative research method utilizing a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is commonly employed to examine phenomena as they exist naturally and to describe them systematically (Creswell, 2014). In this study, structured questionnaires were used to explore participants' perceptions and experiences regarding social media hyperconnectivity and its impact on young people.

Research Sample

The study sample consisted of 198 participants from six European countries: Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Turkey. The participants included professionals working with young people, such as teachers, youth workers, psychologists, and social service specialists, as well as parents. Convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants. This technique involves

selecting individuals who are most readily available and willing to participate, which is particularly suitable when access to the population is limited (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Each country contributed approximately 30 participants to ensure a diverse range of perspectives on social media hyperconnectivity.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Data were collected using two primary methods: a structured questionnaire and focus group discussions. The structured questionnaire, developed within the ERASMEDIAH project, was administered primarily through Google Forms. It included closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data and open-ended questions to capture more nuanced perspectives. The questionnaire focused on participants' perceptions of social media hyperconnectivity, frequency of use, challenges faced, and suggested solutions. In specific cases, paper-based questionnaires were also utilized to accommodate participant preferences. In addition to the questionnaire, each participating country conducted focus group discussions with diverse stakeholders, including educators, youth workers, IT specialists, guidance counselors, and parents of children aged 11–18. These discussions aimed to complement the quantitative data by exploring in-depth perspectives on social media hyperconnectivity, its implications, and potential strategies for addressing its risks. The focus groups provided valuable qualitative insights, allowing for a richer understanding of the cultural and contextual factors influencing the issue. By combining these two methods, the study ensured a comprehensive approach to data collection, capturing both broad trends and detailed, context-specific insights.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies, percentages, and means, to identify general trends and patterns in participants' responses. The findings from the six national reports were synthesized into a consolidated report, allowing for the identification of commonalities and differences across countries. These analyses provided evidence-based insights to guide the development of effective educational strategies to combat social media hyperconnectivity.

Results

The findings of the study highlighted several key insights regarding social media hyperconnectivity and its implications for young people. Participants across all six countries consistently identified increased distractions, reduced attention spans, and emotional challenges such as stress and anxiety as primary consequences of hyperconnectivity. Approximately 75% of participants reported that young people spent more than three hours daily on social media platforms, which they associated with a negative impact on academic performance and social relationships. Another significant finding was the limited awareness among both young people and their caregivers regarding the risks of social media overuse. Participants emphasized the need for structured training programs for youth workers and parents to address these gaps. Moreover, the findings revealed country-specific differences in perceptions of hyperconnectivity risks. For example, participants from Hungary and Turkey were more likely to associate hyperconnectivity with mental health challenges, while respondents from Italy and Spain emphasized its impact on social relationships. Participants also pointed out the importance of integrating practical tools and culturally relevant approaches in educational programs to improve their effectiveness. Peer-to-peer

learning, gamification, and parental involvement were identified as the most promising strategies for mitigating the risks of hyperconnectivity.

The study concluded that social media hyperconnectivity poses significant risks to young people's cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. While existing strategies have shown some promise, the findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, scalable, and culturally sensitive educational interventions. Specifically, the results highlight the value of capacity-building initiatives for youth workers and educators, such as those proposed within the ERASMEDIAH project. By equipping professionals with the knowledge and tools to address hyperconnectivity risks, these programs can foster healthier digital habits among young people. This study serves as a critical foundation for designing evidence-based interventions to combat social media hyperconnectivity in diverse educational contexts across Europe.

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