

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOBILE APPLICATIONS AND ONLINE
PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract: This article examines the impact of mobile applications and online psychological counseling on youth mental health. The study analyzed digital tools for stress reduction, meditation, and mental state monitoring. The results indicate that mobile apps and online psychological support services are effective means of enhancing emotional stability among young people.

Keywords: mental health, mobile applications, online counseling, stress reduction, meditation, youth.

Аннотация: В статье изучено влияние мобильных приложений и онлайн-психологических консультаций на психическое здоровье молодежи. В ходе исследования анализировались цифровые инструменты для снижения стресса, медитации и мониторинга психического состояния. Результаты показали, что мобильные приложения и онлайн-сервисы психической поддержки являются эффективными средствами для повышения эмоциональной стабильности молодых людей.

Ключевые слова: психическое здоровье, мобильные приложения, онлайн-консультации, снижение стресса, медитация, молодежь.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada yoshlar orasida mobil ilovalar va onlayn psixologik maslahatlarning ruhiy salomatlikka ta'siri o'rganilgan. Tadqiqot davomida stressni kamaytirish, meditatsiya va ruhiy holat monitoringi uchun ishlatiladigan raqamli vositalar tahlil qilingan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, mobil ilovalar va onlayn psixologik xizmatlar yoshlarning emotsional barqarorligini oshirishda samarali vosita hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: psixologik salomatlik, mobil ilovalar, onlayn maslahat, stressni kamaytirish, meditatsiya, yoshlar.

INTRODUCTION

In modern society, mental health issues among young people are becoming increasingly relevant. The development of digital technologies and the widespread use of mobile applications, as well as online psychological counseling services, have created new opportunities in this area. Given the increasing incidence of stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion among young people, it is important to provide them with convenient and fast psychological support tools.

Mobile applications and online psychological counseling are considered effective tools for maintaining the mental stability of young people, reducing stress, developing meditation and emotional self-management skills. At the same time, such digital tools allow for individual assistance to individuals, monitoring their psychological state, and self-development.

The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of mobile applications and online psychological counseling among young people, to study their role in reducing stress and improving mental health. This study serves to develop recommendations for practical evaluation of modern digital tools for young people and psychologists and their use.

MAIN PART

Mobile apps are programs specifically designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets. They can be for various purposes: games, social networks, education, banking, healthcare, etc.

Mobile apps are divided into two main types:

Native apps – programs written for a specific operating system (for example, Android or iOS). They run quickly and can use all the capabilities of the device (camera, GPS, sensors). Example: WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok.

Web apps – applications that run through a web browser. No special installation is required, but sometimes their speed is slower than native apps. Example: Google Docs, Trello web version.

Hybrid apps – combine the features of native and web apps. For example, they can run on both Android and iOS from the same code base. Example: Spotify, Uber.

Mobile app usage among youth refers to the habits and trends in the use of various apps on smartphones and tablets by teenagers and young adults (approximately 13–25 years old) [1].

Effectiveness of online counseling. In recent years, online counseling (teletherapy) has become increasingly popular as a means of supporting mental health. Studies show that online psychotherapy is as effective as face-to-face therapy in reducing depression, anxiety, and stress.



Online counseling has the following advantages: the ability to work remotely, saving time and money, and creating a comfortable and confidential environment for some patients.

However, online therapy has limitations, such as the lack of physical cues and nonverbal communication. In cases of serious mental disorders, dangerous thoughts, or crisis situations, face-to-face counseling may be necessary. Meta-analyses show that the effectiveness of online and in-person therapy is often close, but face-to-face therapy may be better at improving a wider range of mental health issues.

Online counseling is an effective tool for addressing many mental health problems, providing easy access to mental health care while taking into account convenience and economic considerations. However, in some cases, in-person therapy may be preferable [2].

Mobile apps play an important role in the lives of young people and have a significant impact on their mental health. This impact has both positive and negative aspects:

Positive impact:

1. Developing social connections – social networks and chat apps make it easier to communicate with friends, support each other, and make new acquaintances.
2. Increasing knowledge and skills – learning new languages, deepening your knowledge, or engaging in creative activities using educational apps can contribute to mental development.
3. Reducing stress and relaxing – using games and meditation apps, young people can improve their mood and reduce stress.

Negative impact:

1. Excessive screen and social media addiction – spending too much time on mobile apps has a negative impact on attention, concentration, and sleep quality.
2. Risks to mental health – some apps can increase stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social pressure among young people. For example, on social networks, a feeling of constant comparison arises.
3. Decreased attention and motivation - when a lot of time is spent on games and short videos, attention to academic activities and other life tasks decreases.

Mobile applications provide an opportunity for young people to gain knowledge, increase creative and social activity, but their moderate and conscious use is important for maintaining mental health.



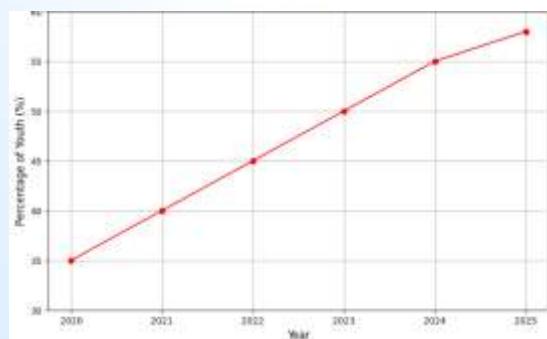


Fig 1. Incidence of negative psychological effects of mobile apps among youth (2020-2025)

The graph shows a gradual increase in the percentage of young people experiencing negative impacts such as stress, anxiety, and social pressure due to excessive use of mobile apps [3].

Table 1
Negative psychological effects of mobile/social app use among

Country / Region	Age group	Mobile/social use issue	% Affected
Various (Gen Z Youth)	13–25	Report mental health challenges	94%
Various (Gen Z Youth)	13–25	Report social media as harmful	31%
Various (Gen Z Youth)	13–25	Report body image affected by social media	72%
Adolescents (unspecified countries)	~13–18	High stress due to use	43.7%
Adolescents (unspecified countries)	~13–18	Low self-esteem	25.3%
Adolescents (unspecified)	~13–18	Sleep disturbances	56.7%
Morocco	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	37.4%
Thailand	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	35.9%
Brazil	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	33.1%
China	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	29.8%
Romania	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	26.9%
Switzerland	~12–15	Smartphone addiction	16.9%



Among young people, mobile applications, especially social networks, are leading to mental stress, sleep disorders, and low self-esteem. Smartphone and social media addiction has been identified in about 17–38% of young people in different countries [4,5].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Preventive measures for negative psychological effects of mobile apps among youth

1. Screen time monitoring and limits

- Young people should limit the time spent on mobile devices and social media.
- Parents and educators can use screen time apps or device settings to manage usage.
- It is recommended to spend no more than 1–2 hours per day on social media platforms.

2. Digital literacy and awareness

- Youth should learn responsible and safe online behavior when using mobile apps.
- Education about online risks, misinformation, cyberbullying, and social pressure can protect mental health.

3. Balanced lifestyle

- Engaging in physical activity, outdoor recreation, creative hobbies, and maintaining a proper sleep schedule reduces negative effects of mobile apps.
- Offline activities help relieve stress and anxiety.

4. Mental health support and counseling

- Using both online and offline mental health support services is recommended.
- If symptoms of stress, anxiety, or depression appear, consulting a psychologist or psychotherapist is essential.

5. Parental and educational guidance

- Parents and educators should teach youth to use mobile apps responsibly and beneficially.
- Protecting youth from constant comparison, cyberbullying, and harmful content is crucial.

6. Encouraging self-regulation and reflection

- Young people should develop the habit of evaluating and reflecting on their online activities.
- For example, at the end of the day: “How much time did I spend on social media



today, and was it beneficial?"

Mobile apps provide youth with opportunities for learning, communication, and creativity, but conscious, regulated, and safe usage is essential for preserving mental health and reducing negative psychological effects [6].

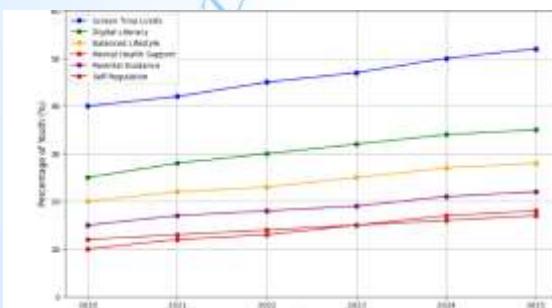


Fig 2. Most used preventive measures against negative effects of mobile apps (2020-2025)

As the graph shows, the most commonly used method among young people to prevent the negative effects of mobile applications is Screen Time Limits [7].

The following is an analysis of the work of scientists on the effectiveness of mobile applications and online psychological counseling among young people:

“Effectiveness of Mobile Health Application Interventions for Youth Well-Being”. Asian Journal of Public Health Practice, 2025. This study investigates the effectiveness of mobile app interventions for improving mental health in adolescents and young adults. The research highlights how mobile apps combined with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can improve psychosocial outcomes and reduce stress levels. Digital interventions showed significant positive effects compared to traditional methods [8].

“Mobile Apps to Reduce Depressive Symptoms and Anxiety in Youth: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis”, 2024. A meta-analysis of 36 clinical trials assessing mobile apps for reducing depression, anxiety, and psychological stress in youth. The results suggest that mobile apps are generally effective, but further rigorous research is needed due to variability in study quality.

“Mental Health Mobile Apps for Preadolescents and Adolescents: A Systematic Review”. 2016, This systematic review examines mobile apps designed for children and adolescents to support mental health. While the number of available apps is growing, the study points out that scientific evidence on their efficacy is still limited. User engagement is generally high, but clinical validation remains insufficient.

“Mobile App for Improving the Mental Health of Youth in Out-of-Home Care”, 2024. This randomized controlled trial (RCT) assessed a mobile app designed to improve mental health

outcomes for youth in out-of-home care. The intervention focused on reducing anxiety and depression and enhancing emotion regulation. Initial results indicated positive mental health improvements among participants.

“Artificial Intelligence-Based Mobile Phone Apps for Child Mental Health”, 2025. This review explores AI-based mobile apps aimed at supporting mental health in children and adolescents. Many apps have not undergone full clinical trials, but their potential for delivering personalized psychological support is highlighted.

“Understanding and Facilitating Mental Health Help-Seeking of Young Adults: A Socio-technical Ecosystem Framework”, 2024. This study models the socio-technical ecosystem of mental health help-seeking among young adults. It emphasizes the role of digital platforms, mobile apps, and online services in facilitating access to psychological support and promoting emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Mobile applications and online psychological counseling have become increasingly important tools for supporting mental health among young people. This study shows that digital tools such as meditation apps, stress-reduction programs, and online counseling services can enhance emotional stability, reduce stress, and improve overall psychological well-being.

While mobile apps provide opportunities for learning, social connection, and creativity, excessive use can lead to negative consequences, including addiction, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep disturbances, and reduced attention. Preventive measures such as screen time monitoring, digital literacy, balanced lifestyle, parental guidance, mental health support, and self-regulation are essential to mitigate these risks.

Overall, conscious, moderate, and guided use of mobile applications, combined with accessible online psychological support, can serve as an effective strategy to improve mental health among youth. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effectiveness of these digital interventions and optimize their use in different cultural and social contexts.

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