

Research Paper

To Study the relationship between Social Media Addiction, Self Esteem and Fear of Missing Out

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a platform that allows people to exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks and today, with the easy access to the net, people of all ages, especially youngsters, are bent towards using these apps to stay in touch with their peers. This continuous increase in the use of social media has led to an addiction to such networking sites. This addiction is often thought to be mediated by the fear of missing out and self-esteem. Thus, the study focuses on the relationship between social media addiction, fear of missing out and self-esteem. For this purpose, the study used a quantitative methodology using surveys as a data collecting tool. Participants included 120 students aged 18-22 studying in colleges of Delhi NCR selected through convenience sampling. In processing the data, correlation and linear regression was used. Results showed that social media addiction levels increase alongside increases in the fear of missing out. Self-esteem on the other hand decreased as addiction levels increased. It was also found that self-esteem and fear of missing out have a negative relationship. Linear regression found that all the three variables predict variance in each other to a certain extent. Thus, the final results showed a significant relationship between all the three variables.

Keywords: *Social Media Addiction; Self-Esteem; Fear of Missing Out*

Human beings have intrinsic wants to belong and interact, and interpersonal contact is the key to fulfilling these demands (as cited in Hou, 2019). The techniques of interpersonal communication have radically changed in recent decades as information technology has advanced, particularly with the rapid spread of Internet-based social media (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, or Instagram). Many kids use such social media sites to make relationships, connect with others around the world, share and learn new things, develop stronger personalities, and improve their social life (Jan et al., 2017). The excess use of such social media websites has led to the development of a new phenomenon called social media addiction (SMA). Social media addiction can be defined as a “type of

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internet addiction, in which individuals have a compulsion to use social media platforms in excess” (Griffiths, 2000; Starcevic, 2013).

Social Media Addiction

By providing opportunities for social support and self-expression, social networking taps into very basic human needs (Riva, Wiederhold and Cipresso, 2016 as cited in Griffith & Kuss, 2017). This may be one of the reasons why social media sites have been gaining so much popularity among people in recent times. The 'need' to check one's social media accounts could be linked to both quick gratification (the need for immediate, short-term pleasure) and the production of dopamine (the chemical in the brain associated with reward and pleasure). Users may constantly check their social media pages due to a desire for a 'hit' of dopamine and a failure to receive quick gratification.

One known theory that explains why users are getting addicted to social media platforms is the users and gratification theory. In this approach, the general media user is seen to be in control, rather than studying them as a passive receiver of effects. U&G theorists look at *motives* for using media and the *needs* that media satisfies. This theory gained new momentum and significance in the last five to ten years due to the development of social media (Raacke, Bonds-Raacke, 2008: 169). U&G theory studies how and why people use social media. In a media-laden world, people have come to depend on media platforms for all kinds of information. For this reason, the U&G approach has generated a number of interesting theories among which the most predominant is the dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). These theorists identified three ways in which people develop a “dependency” on media outlets. First, the media provides us with information that enables us to understand the world. Second, we may depend on the media for orientation, either in terms of action (deciding to go on a diet, or voting in an election) or interaction (how to deal with social situations). Finally, the media provides us with opportunities for play (relaxation, or social activity).

Internet addiction, social media addiction, and smartphone addiction are all classified as behavioural addictions in the literature (Savci & Aysan, 2017). Even the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V (DSM-5) accepts behavioral addictions such as internet addiction and shopping addiction as a disorder, however, due to insufficient evidence social media addiction is yet to be included in the DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Many studies on social media use and mental health have also found that long-term use of social media sites like Facebook is favourably related with mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and depression, while being adversely connected with long-term well-being (as cited in Hou et al., 2019).

What's hazardous about obsessive use is that if users don't get their fulfilment, they may internalise views that it's because they're 'unpopular,' 'unfunny,' and so on. A lack of 'likes' on a status update can lead to negative self-reflection, leading to constant refreshing of the page in the hopes of seeing that another person has 'enjoyed' the post, hence assisting with personal validation.

Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO)

Researchers have identified that the constant use of social media websites is linked to the development of FOMO. Even though FOMO isn't a totally new concept, the idea and discussion of FOMO has altogether increased with the rise in the use of social media (Abel et al., 2016). FOMO refers to “experiencing a pervasive apprehension that others might be

having rewarding experiences from which one is absent” (Przybylski, 2013, p. 1841). An example of feeling out may be: when a person’s friend group goes to a party where the said person is not invited so that person spends a lot of time on social media to keep tabs on what is happening. This feeling of being left out is known as fear of missing out. And although this “apprehension that someone might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent” has always existed as a part of adolescent life, the pervasive and continuous nature of social media intensifies this experience (Przybylski, 2013). In brief, FOMO “is the fear that others have things that you don’t or are experiencing things that you wish you were” (JWT Intelligence, 2011).

Youth now-a-days are always on their phones, interacting with other people, checking other’s and updating their own status, uploading and liking each other’s posts on social media. FOMO is also believed to fuel the significance of familiarity with most up-to-date news, social happenings and get-togethers. These actions conceivably persuade people to compare their own lives to the lives they read/see on social media websites—making them feel less happy with their lives and practices. A study conducted by Beyens et al (2016) found that FOMO leads to an increase in the level of Facebook use which is further associated with increased levels of stress.

Many studies have also shown FOMO to be a mediating factor of social media addiction. A national study of 224 participants conducted by Cargill (2019) showed that the use of social media is related to statistically significant higher FOMO among adults. Franchina et al., (2018) found out that FOMO is a positive predictor of both how frequently teenagers use various social media platforms as well as how many platforms they actively use.

Self-Esteem

Rosenberg (1965) defined self esteem (S.E) as “one’s positive or negative attitude toward oneself and one’s evaluation of one’s own thoughts and feelings overall in relation to oneself” (as cited in Park & Park, 2019). Coopersmith (1967) on the other hand defined Self-esteem as “a person’s positive or negative evaluation of the self; i.e., the extent to which an individual view’s the self as worthwhile and competent”. Gonzales & Hancock (2010) developed a Hyperpersonal Model which explained that since social media users are continually exposed to others' carefully chosen and glorified online self-presentations, it leads to the lowering of their self-esteem.

S.E impacts an individual profoundly to such an extent that it affects his/her accomplishments and development in different domains of life. For example, low self-esteem is related to various mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety and learning problems. Trzesniewski et al. (2006) found that low self-esteem during puberty predicts poorer mental and physical wellbeing, more awful financial conditions, and higher levels of crime in young adulthood. Jan, Soomro & Ahmad (2017) studied the relationship between social networking sites and self-esteem and found a strong relationship between social media and low self-esteem.

Further, as stated by Forest & Woods (2012), many research studies have found that people with low self-esteem find social media to be a safer place to express themselves than those with strong self-esteem. According to various research, the association between poor self-esteem and social media use suggests that people with low self-esteem spend more time on social media to enhance their self-image and self-esteem (as cited in Ardiana & Tumanggor, 2020).

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In conclusion, evidence from previous studies have shown that social media use is highly linked to anxiety, loneliness, lower self-esteem and high levels of fear of missing out. Edmonds (n.d.) stated that researchers, mental health policymakers, and the social media sector will need to look into whether this is a causal or just a correlation. The present study was therefore conducted keeping this and the lack of research studying the impact of social media addiction particularly in the Indian context in mind. The aim of this study was to explore the social media addiction and its influence on fear of missing out and self esteem of college going students of Delhi NCR, India.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem.
- There will be a significant relationship between social media addiction and FOMO.
- There will be a significant relationship between FOMO and self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the present study were college going students aged between 18-22 years old. The sample of 120 participants included both females and males. All the participants were undergraduate college students in Delhi NCR. The samples were selected through convenient sampling.

Instruments

The three scales used for the present study are the Social Media Addiction Questionnaire (SMAQ), Fear of Missing out Scale and Self Esteem Inventory.

- ***Social Media Addiction Questionnaire:*** The social media addiction questionnaire is developed by Cenzig Şahin (2018). The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert type scale which consists of 29 items and 4 sub-dimensions. The current scale can be used to determine social media addictions of the students, aged 12-22 years. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be .93 and the test-retest reliability coefficient is .94. Factor analysis performed to measure validity and reliability showed that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool to identify student's social media addiction (Sahin, 2018).
- ***Fear of Missing Out Scale:*** Fear of missing out scale is developed by Przybylski, et al. (2013). It is a 10 -scale item. The scale forms a reliable composite measure ($\alpha = .87$ to $.90$). In the Turkish adaptation of this scale by Can & Satici (2019) the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be .79 in one study and .78 in another study. The test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be .86. In a study conducted by Perrone (2016) to test reliability and validity of the scale, results showed that Results FOMOs is a reliable and valid self-report measure for quantifying FOMO.
- ***Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory:*** The Coopersmith self-esteem scale was originally developed for children aged 8-15. Later a revised form was developed for the use of adults aged 16 and above (Adult form, form C; Myhill and Lorr 1978). The test has a built-in "lie scale" to help determine if people are trying too hard to appear to have high self-esteem. If they answered "like me" to three or more of the following items: 1, 6, 13, 20, 27, 34, 41, 48; they have to retake the test. The test-retest reliability was found to be .80 (Ryden, 1978).

RESULT

The result was started by first analyzing the correlation between the measured variables. Correlation coefficient is used to find out the relationship and strength between the variables. Social media Addiction and Fear of missing out are moderately related to each other (Table 1). However, both these variables: social media addiction and FOMO are negatively and weakly correlated to self esteem (-.350 & -.320 respectively). Though not a strong relationship, there does exist a significant correlation between the three variables. This leads to the acceptance of the hypotheses.

TABLE 1 PEARSON'S CORRELATION

	SMAQ	FOMO SCALE	S.E INVENTORY
SMAQ	1	.457**	-.350**
FOMO SCALE	.457**	1	-.320**
S.E INVENTORY	-.350**	-.320**	1

N= 120 **p < .01

Table 2 presents significant regression equations for social media addiction. This implies that predictor variables significantly predict variance in the criterion variable i.e social media addiction. Model 1 shows fear of missing out as the predictor variable. The adjusted R value is 0.202. This means that 20.2% of the variance in social media addiction can be explained by fear of missing out. The equation of the same is $y = 50.51 + 1.0 * x$. The equation helps us predicts the score of social media addiction if the score of FOMO is known.

Model 2 implies that self-esteem as a predictor variable significantly affects social media addiction. The adjusted R square value for the same is .122 which means that 12.2% of the variance can be explained by one's self esteem. The equation formed by the regression analysis for this model is $y = 95.74 + 0.51 * x$. The equation helps us predict the score of social media addiction if the score of self-esteem is known.

Finally Model 3 represents both fear of missing out and self esteem as predictors of social media addiction. Both these predictor variables together predict social media addiction by 25.5%, adjusted R square value being .255. The equation for this is $y = 56.27 + 0.25 * x$. The equation helps us predict the score of social media addiction if the score of both FOMO & self-esteem is known.

Gender difference was also calculated but no significant relationship was found.

TABLE 2 REGRESSION COEFFICIENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	β	S.E.	B	β	S.E.	B	β	S.E.
CONSTANT	50.51		4.65	95.74		5.168	67.61		7.80
FOMO		1.07	.193			.907		.384	.199
S.E.				-5.12	-3.50	.126	-.332	-.227	.123
R ²		.208			.122			.255	

Note: N= 120. We examined the impact of FOMO and Self Esteem on social media addiction. In Model 1, we entered the control variable of fear of missing out to predict social media addiction. In model 2, we entered self esteem as predictor and finally in Model 3, we entered both self-esteem and fear of missing out as predictors of social media addiction.

**p < .01

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to find if there is a relationship between social media addiction, fear of missing out and self-esteem. To collect data, a sample of 120 students were selected using convenient sampling. Social media addiction questionnaire (Sahin, 2018), Fear of missing out scale (Przybylski et. al, 2013) and Coopersmiths self-esteem inventory (Rayden, 1978) were used. Using IBM SPSS, correlation coefficient was calculated. Results showed that there is a significant correlation among all the three variables at 0.01 level of significance which leads to retainment of the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis of the study, postulating that higher social media addiction will have a significant negative impact on self esteem was accepted. This was consistent with previous research (Hawi & Rupert, 2016; Azami, Erl, & Chuan, n.d.) that states that excessive use of social media by both men and women affects self-esteem. Social media negatively correlates with self-esteem which indicates that as social media addiction increases, self-esteem will decline. Armstrong, Philips and Saling (2000) found that people with low self-esteem are more addicted to social media apps than people with high self-esteem. This result is also consistent with other researches such as those of Blanchnio et al, (2016); Andreassen et al, (2017) & Ingólfssdóttir (2017).

The second hypothesis of the study stated that there is a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and fear of missing out. Results showed that the correlation between the two was 0.45 which means that higher addiction leads to higher levels of FOMO. This leads to the acceptance of the second hypothesis. FOMO is also said to result in addiction to social media outlets in order to stay connected (Roberts & David, 2019). Social media addiction positively correlated with FOMO which indicates that FOMO can be seen as an acceptable predictor for the use of most social media platforms (Franchina et. al 2018). A study conducted by Blackwell et al. (2017) stated only FOMO predicted social media addiction. The result that FOMO predicts social media addiction is also in line with literature of Hosgor, et al. (2017); vanden Abeele & van Rooij (2016).

Finally, it was also hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between FOMO and self-esteem. Results showed that though a significant correlation does exist between FOMO and self-esteem, it is negative in nature ($r = -.32$). This means higher FOMO, lower self-esteem and vice-versa. This is consistent with a research conducted by Belo (2017) in which the correlation between FOMO and self-esteem was calculated using a sample of 69 participants. This leads to the retainment of the third hypothesis as well.

A study conducted by psychologists of Nottingham Trent University to study the causes of social network addiction found out that FOMO was the most important element in explaining the growth of social media addiction (*'Fear of Missing out' Driving Social Media Addiction, Study Suggests*, 2018). To study if this holds true in the Indian Culture as well, Regression Analysis was further conducted. Regression analysis is used to identify if a variable has an impact on the topic of interest or not. Result shows that FOMO significantly predicts social media addiction. This result was also in line with previous studies such as that of Beyens et al (2016); Akbay (2016); & Gezgin (2018).

Bahrainian et al., (2014) conducted a study to explore the relationship of internet addiction with self-esteem and depression in university students of Iran. The result of their study found self-esteem to be a significant predictor of Internet addiction. To check if self esteem plays a role in predicting social media addiction as well we extended our regression analysis.

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Results showed significant regression equations indicating that self esteem does have a role to play in determining social media addiction. Various studies such as those of Hawi & Samaha (2016); Forest & Wood (2012), Blachino, Przepiorka, & Pantic, (2016) and Guven (2019) have explored the relationship between self esteem and social media addiction. These studies concluded that those with low self-esteem use social media as a means of boosting their self-esteem. Others who have poor self-esteem see social media as a safer place to share their views or opinions than people who have strong self-esteem. They might prefer to communicate online rather than in person.

Due to lack of research papers we wanted to study how both these factors together impact social media addiction. Since FOMO and self esteem were individually predicting social media addiction, it was hypothesized that they will also impact addiction levels together. The regression analysis result showed both FOMO and self esteem together predicting 25.5% of variance in social media addiction, thus retaining this hypothesis as well.

CONCLUSION

In the present study social media addiction, fear of missing out and self esteem of people were measured using the SMAQ, Fear of missing out scale and Self Esteem Inventory. The results indicated that all these three variables have a weak but significant relationship with each other. Linear regression was also calculated which found out how much one variable predicts variance for another variable.

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Conflict of Interest

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