

The Study of Self-Esteem and Addiction to Instagram in Males and Females

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ABSTRACT

In today's time, the one thing which has changed us and had the most impact on our lives is a technology and social media. The current research aims to study Self-esteem and addiction to Instagram in males and females. Convenience Sampling and Snowball sampling techniques were used to gather data from the participants. The sample consisted of 216 participants, 106 males and 110 females. Two questionnaires were administered i.e., Rosenberg Self-esteem scale by Morris Rosenberg (1965) and the Test for Instagram Addiction by Lancy D'Souza, Samyukta A., Tevin John Bivera (2018). T-tests and Pearson's correlation methods were employed for the analysis of the collected data. The results indicated that self-esteem and addiction to Instagram were negatively correlated which means that if the usage of social media applications like Instagram increases then the levels of self-esteem of an individual decrease. Although no significant gender difference was found in the levels of self-esteem among males and females. But a significant gender difference was found in the addiction to Instagram where the scores of females were higher than males. Further research is warranted on the topic. High usage of social media applications leaves a strong impact on an individual's personality.

Keywords: *Instagram, Self-Esteem, Young Adults, Addiction*

In today's time, the one thing which has changed us and had the most impact on our lives is technology and Social Media. Over the past few decades, it has completely changed every aspect of our lives and our society from the way we are born to the way we work or socialise and everything in between. The invention of technology and its evolution have impacted our lives on multiple levels and affected our lifestyles immensely. Social media has one of its major impacts on an individual's growth and development, it includes their social and cognitive skills. Nowadays, a lot of people don't interact with each other like previous generations used to do.

The individuals who have access to gadgets like phones, computers and tablets and the ones who use them excessively have higher risks of obesity as they usually oppose going out and indulging in outdoor activities. They prefer to stay inside and use their gadgets to play, surf

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the internet, go through their social media accounts by using applications like WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat etc., and hence they don't get as much exercise as they should get.

Recent studies also show that the screen light from phones and other gadgets may cause mental and physical health problems like it may weaken our eyesight and cause headaches as well. This can cause trouble in the sleep cycle of an individual. It is also seen that due to the high usage of gadgets people don't step out that often as well. Every individual should at least go out once in a while and spend some time with nature, they should also give exposure to sunlight which supplies vitamin d and helps us to fight infections and keeps our skin healthy.

There are various arguments or disagreements amongst the experts regarding the effect of social media usage on an individual's life. Few believe that technology like the internet and social media applications may cause harm to an individual's personality and may impair our brain functioning over a period of time, and others believe it to be the advancing intellectual development and better future of our world.

Many researchers have narrowed their research a bit more and focused on a particular gadget or particular social media application based on their high usage. This gave them a clearer picture in this area of research and to collect more data on social media's impact on our lives.

Social media applications not only surround us it also leaves an impact on our lives and it can be people of any age group, although it has been observed that it may have a profound impact on young children and young adults on the way they think, feel and behave. As a result, a lot of individuals nowadays usually think they are being misunderstood and then this confusion creates a disconnect between their relationships and creates a gap in their real social lives. The misunderstanding leads to a lot of confusion and fights and some adolescents then have very little respect for their elders' knowledge, values and skills and experience, this is what they usually term as 'generation gap'. Social media has completely affected young adults' way of interacting with others and had a great or huge impact on their social, cognitive, mental and emotional well-being.

Social media has a high level of effect on the self-esteem, self-confidence and self-awareness of any individual. It is very common for individuals who use social media way too much to have negative moods, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence. A lot of behavioural issues are also seen in adolescents and young adults sometimes based upon their social media accounts being updated. Even though for a few people, social media may help to boost their self-esteem, based on previous research, more negative effects are seen of social media in an individual's life. The major saying which has been coming a long way now is true for the usage of social media, if anything is used in excess then it can always turn out to have a negative effect more than positive effects.

Youngsters lower their frequency to meet their peer group and try to hide behind the social media applications such as Instagram, Facebook etc., which might affect their behaviours, social skills and overall personalities. Individuals who do not prefer to interact with any other person but only through social media accounts have a lot of problems in picking up social cues and developing any kind of relationships with anyone in life, this can lead to various negative consequences as they grow in their lives with time. Since most people spend half of their time behind social media applications, they even have problems

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developing or expressing emotions in the presence of others. They mostly like to stay alone and engage themselves with some gadget instead of talking to other individuals in real life.

But all these negative factors don't really mean that social media is bad for people or they should never ever use it. It provided us with tons of positive opportunities as well to acquire various skills and learn new things or to have entertainment or to socialize with others over gadgets using various social media applications and video or audio calling features but only when it is used appropriately. Self-control should be there for older adults regarding their usage of social media applications and Parents should set daily limits and set timetables for their children for their usage of social media applications or the internet each day, they should interact with their children to know their schedule and point of view. Initially, it might be a bit difficult and it may take a while in adjusting to the timetable. But with time, it will get easier and when an individual will be able to use technology after their long day of school or college or office then they will still be satisfied with it and soon it will become a part of their lives.

Even though it seems that all the negative factors are overpowering the social media applications like Instagram, it has a lot of benefits for both kids and adults in the coming future. 'Social Media' is a broad term and yet it has to be discovered and a lot more research needs to be done to study its effect on an individual's lives and the way it affects them and their social and cognitive skills.

It is very important for individuals to understand the importance of time limits on the usage of Instagram or WhatsApp and its effects on our lives. They should keep in mind to use it only for a specific amount of time to have peace of mind for themselves and others and so that they can lead a healthy life too.

Social Media

Social Media can be defined as a group of internet-based websites or applications that help people participate in creating or sharing content to build social networking. Most people use social media sites for their personal reasons at first and then for other purposes like business networking or studies and work. It has become a crucial part of their lives and has no doubt become their reality. It has gained immense popularity in the last few decades, especially among young adults, but with awareness people of all age groups use it nowadays. Most people use their social media sites more than once a day as it is very addictive in nature. A lot of young adults are using social media, especially platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc., to know different people, connect with the world, build new relationships, share and gain knowledge, gain popularity and have better social lives. It has both negative and positive effects on people's lives. Although most of the studies show that the overall self-growth of an individual gets affected due to excessive use of social media.

Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform, internet-based which has around 400 million active users per month, in which people share 80 million pictures with almost around 3.5 billion people all across the globe on a daily basis. It was developed in 2010 and soon taken over by "Mark Zuckerberg", the owner of Facebook in 2012. In recent years it has become one of the most popular applications and is highly used by people of all age groups.

The aim of social media applications like Instagram is to connect to people all around the globe, it helps people to make new connections every day. It is an application that is used for

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multi-purposes like social media surfing, posting pictures, personal networking, business networking etc. A lot of individuals post their daily lives on it to share it with people and maybe influence them or for just them to see it and for them to like it or leave comments on it. Such activities may sometimes lead a few individuals to judge other people, comment on them or they may even try to copy them based on their social media life. Constant competition is one comparison that may lead up to a lot of mental and physical health problems such as anxiety, low self-esteem, low self-awareness and depression.

Self-Esteem

As defined by Rosenberg himself, “self-esteem is one’s positive or negative attitude toward oneself and one’s evaluation of one’s own thoughts and feelings overall in relation to oneself.”

Self-esteem can be described as an individual’s subjective opinion of themselves. It shows how much they value themselves. It is a personality trait that tells us about a person’s sense of self-worth, beliefs and personal values which may also depend upon the amount of appraisal they get from others. Self-esteem may vary throughout life depending upon the situations which occur in their surroundings such as schools, colleges or workplaces. Self-esteem is measurable and malleable using psychological tests and it can be changed with time and situations.

Social Media and Self-Esteem

Social media applications like Instagram may have a direct effect on an individual's personality traits like self-esteem, self-awareness or others. On social media platforms like Instagram, the number of followers an individual might gain or lose may affect their self-esteem and self-confidence. People nowadays judge their lives based on their social media profiles, they mostly compare their own lives with others and usually think that others are happier than them. They end up living in a virtual world more than the real world. People compare themselves with others based on the no. of likes they are getting and how much appreciation can one get on their social media profiles. But as applications like Instagram are becoming a more and more regular part of our lives, it is very important to study their possible negative and positive effects on an individual’s life.

Applications like Instagram are like a zone or black hole, in which if you enter then it’s very difficult to find your way back. We have become overly dependent on such social media applications. Their new techniques, ideas and various strategies keep us stuck to our phones and make it very difficult to get rid of them. Applications like Instagram or Facebook keep us engaged in it with their new updates as well. They make us waste a lot of precious time in our lives as well. Instead of saving time or indulging in other activities, we keep on scrolling through our accounts to find new updates from other people such as our friends, colleagues or celebrities as well. But these constant updates are also creating a lot of fear of missing out on individuals or lowering their self-esteem levels because of the constant comparison they do by thinking that their life is not royal or grand enough to celebrate.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: The study of Self-Esteem and Addiction to Instagram in males and females.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between self-esteem and addiction to Instagram among males and females.

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- To measure the gender difference in the level of self-esteem among males and females.
- To measure the gender difference in the addiction to Instagram among males and females.
- To measure the difference in levels of self-esteem in age groups below 30 and above 30.
- To measure the difference in addiction to Instagram in age groups below 30 and above 30.

Sample

The size of the sample was two hundred and sixteen and was selected using convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The sample consisted of a hundred and six males and a hundred and ten females. Since the study is not focused on a particular age group, the sample consists of individuals in the age range of eighteen to sixty years of age.

Locale of the study

COVID-19 made it very difficult to collect the data on a one-on-one basis, so the data had to be collected online using google forms. The form was shared using different social media applications, participants filed it across all the age groups from all over the world. There was no particular target population for this study.

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

- **Rosenberg Self-esteem scale by Morris Rosenberg (1965):** This scale is a self-report 10-item scale used globally for self-esteem. Feelings of self-acceptance and self-worth are summed up using the 10 given statements. The four-point scale ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree answers. The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale is a brief and unidimensional extent of overall confidence. It has shown incredible unfaltering quality and authenticity across countless diverse sample groups. Its test-retest reliability is 0.85.
- **Test for Instagram Addiction (2018):** It was developed by Lancy D'Souza, Samyukta A., Tevin John Bivera. The scale is of 26 items which were based on the Indian population of adolescents and adults. The results have been very valid and reliable. The entire questionnaire is divided into 6 factors to understand the individual's addiction to Instagram and its impact on their daily lives. Its test-retest reliability is 0.931.

Procedure

- A google form was created to collect responses for both the scales used, one subsection for each variable i.e., self-esteem and addiction to Instagram
- The google form link was circulated everywhere online via various social networking websites such as WhatsApp, and Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- A total of two hundred and sixteen adults between the ages of eighteen to sixty participated in the study. Hundred and six participants were males and the Hundred and ten were females.
- The participants were informed about the purpose of the study at the beginning of the form itself and that participation was completely voluntary.
- After the completion of data collection, the responses for both scales were scored individually, for each entry.
- The statistical analysis was later done according to the aim and objectives of the present study.

RESULTS

Table 1. Pearson's correlation for Self-Esteem and Addiction to Instagram

	Self-Esteem		d.f.
	R	P	
Addiction to Instagram	.389**	.000	214

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows that the results of Pearson Correlation (-0.389) are significant at the 0.01 level. This means that there is a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and addiction to Instagram.

Table 2. Independent sample t-test of Self-Esteem among males and Females

Self-Esteem		N	M	SD	T	d.f.	P
Gender	Males	106	20.764	5.387	.755	214	.451
	Females	110	20.164	6.249			

Note: $p < .01$

The independent sample t-test results in table 2 have shown that there was no significant effect of gender on self-esteem levels, $t(214) = .755$, $p = .451$, as almost equal scores were obtained among males ($M=20.76$, $SD=5.39$) and females ($M=20.16$, $SD=6.25$). Therefore, the results are not statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Table 3. Independent sample t-test of Addiction to Instagram among males and Females

Addiction to Instagram		N	M	SD	t	d.f.	P
Gender	Males	106	50.962	17.069	-2.613	214	.010
	Females	110	57.236	18.175			

Note: $p < .01$

The independent sample t-test results in table 3 have shown that there was a significant gender difference in the levels of addiction to Instagram, $t(214) = -2.613$, $p = .010$, as females ($M = 57.24$, $SD = 18.16$) had higher scores than males ($M = 50.96$, $SD = 17.07$). Therefore, the results are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Table 4. Independent sample t-test for levels of Self-Esteem in age groups below 30 and above 30

Self-Esteem		N	M	SD	t	d.f.	P
Age	≥ 31	61	22.574	4.514	3.424	214	$< .001$
	< 31	155	19.626	6.094			

Note: $p < .01$

The independent sample t-test results in table 4 have shown that there was a significant age difference in level of self-esteem, $t(214) = 3.42$, $p < .001$, even though age group of above 30 ($M = 22.57$, $SD = 4.51$) had higher scores than the age group of below 30 ($M = 19.63$, $SD = 6.09$). Therefore, the results are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Table 5. Independent sample t-test for levels of Addiction to Instagram in age groups below 30 and above 30

		Addiction to Instagram					
		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>d.f.</i>	<i>P</i>
Age	>=31	61	46.639	15.439	-4.011	214	<.001
	<31	155	57.116	17.949			

Note: $p < .01$

The independent sample t-test results in table 5 have shown that there was a significant age difference in level of Addiction to Instagram, $t(214) = -4.01$, $p = <0.001$, as the age group of below 30 ($M = 57.12$, $SD = 17.95$) had higher scores than the age group of above 30 ($M = 46.64$, $SD = 15.44$). Therefore, the results are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Through a thorough analysis of data, it can be said that Social media applications such as Instagram tend to play a negative role in our lives on our physical as well as mental health. This is because of our new lifestyle which is highly influenced by social media. The way people display their lives on social media sometimes varies a lot from their real lives. People tend to live their reel life more than in real life. In various articles and studies, it is seen that individuals have increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression and other things due to high usage of social media.

Sometimes, social media helps individuals as well to get out of their comfort zone, it helps people to connect to each other worldwide, and express and showcase their art all around the world. It helps them to step out into the world and sometimes it also provides courage to people to go out.

Therefore, it can be said based on various researches, articles and this study that social media has both positive and negative effects on an individual's life. The severity of its effect depends from case to case as every individual is unique and lives a different life. Even though social media sometimes plays an important role in our lives, its negative effects need to be taken as a serious concern and need to be curbed to reduce its effect on the physical and mental health of individuals. Better ideas and ways need to be explored for better treatment plans for addiction to social media and to avoid its negative effects.

In this study, it was clearly seen that self-esteem and addiction to Instagram were negatively correlated which means that if the usage of social media applications like Instagram increases then the levels of self-esteem of an individual decrease. Although no significant gender difference was found in the levels of self-esteem among males and females. But a significant gender difference was found in the addiction to Instagram where the scores of females were higher than males. Along with this, a significant difference was seen in the age groups above 30 and below 30 in both the levels of self-esteem and addiction to Instagram. The age group above 30 had higher mean value levels of self-esteem and low mean value levels of addiction to Instagram whereas the group age below 30 had lower mean value in self-esteem and had a higher mean value in the addiction to Instagram.

With the new lifestyle and technology, the lives of people are getting busier and busier with social media and its usage. The new social media applications are taking over our daily lives

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and becoming an intriguing part of them. It has intertwined maximum in our current lives from young children to older adults everybody uses social media these days.

More usage of social media is showing a negative effect on an individual's life. It shows a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and stress and decreases a person's self-confidence and self-esteem. This study also shows a negative relationship in levels of self-esteem with the usage of Instagram applications in the sample population of 216 participants.

Further research should be done on this topic and the focus should be more on making the best use of social media and ways to reduce its negative impact. Factors like self-esteem, and self-confidence decrease with high usage of social media, The negative correlation is not a good indicator for a longer time in any individual's life. So the focus should be more on getting a positive correlation of the variables along with other ways to limit the use of social media and making people aware of its both pros and cons. It's very important to understand the relationship between social media applications like Instagram and other factors like self-esteem and self-confidence, etc.

Future recommendations:

1. It's a very new topic and a very limited amount of research is done on this topic. There is a lot of scope for new findings around this topic.
2. Another recommendation would be to expand the location of the study as maximum research is limited to the population in south India.
3. The study has shown a negative relationship between self-esteem and addiction to Instagram, so it should be done on an even larger sample to observe if the results can be generalized.
4. The focus of future studies should be more on finding the solution for the findings or the causal factors of the negative correlations of the variables.

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Conflict of Interest

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