The International Journal of INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Research Paper

Analysing the Relation between Social Media Usage and Narcissism among Young Adults: Indian Setting

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, the most chosen mode of engagement and interaction is social media consisting of the majority of the young population guiding their lifestyles and affecting their personalities. A considerable amount of studies have been devoted to examining the effects of social media on the growing generation. In the current study, a sample of 106 participants has been studied to analyse how the intensity of using social media is associated with developing traits of narcissism among the population aged between 18 - 25. Standardised scales were used to measure the usage of social media and narcissism among young adults. The study concluded a significant positive correlation between narcissism and social media usage. Further, it was suggested that the Use of the Daily Reminders app's in-built features should be encouraged, time management can be done through various Pomodoro apps, and self-appreciation techniques were recommended to rule out social validation. In Addition to that, it was suggested to always keep a difference between self-obsession and self-love.

Keywords: *Social Media Usage, Narcissism, Young Adults, Indian Setting, Self Love*

In this era of e-socialisation, most of us are focused on following trends, escaping real lives while engaging in our virtual worlds and activating our social selves. It suddenly becomes too important for us to look lively on social platforms may be to belong somewhere or to fit in this fast-paced changing world. The fear of missing out is prevalent in most of the budding generation which leads them to stay hooked up to their social forums, paranoid about growing their followers and their reach in the audience which in turn disrupts their frame of mind which further guides their actions affecting their overall personality. There are individuals who believe in gaining any kind of social media validation and believe that this kind of acceptance confirms their identity. An increase in the intensity of this kind of feeling can make the person ignorant of the rights and wrongs in the path of their lives thus, giving birth to one of the negative sides of personality, Narcissism.

Owusu- Acheaw and Larson (2015) conducted a study with a sample of 1578 tertiary institutions students to assess the use of social media and its effect on their academic performance, in Ghana. The study observed that most students spend between thirty minutes

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to three hours per day. In addition, it revealed the negative correlation between academic performance and the use of social media.

Research was conducted to understand the social identity levels of adolescents and to examine the negative effects of social media on their social identity from the perspective of social work on a sample of 200 adolescents in the age group of 15–18 years. The results depicted a variety of negative effects of social media on the social identity of adolescents. (Elsayed, 2021)

The Variables taken up for the study are Social Media Usage and Narcissism, both of which are thoroughly discussed in the following section.

Social Media Usage
Social Media Usage refers to the amount of time an individual devotes to different social networking sites.

Social Network sites can be defined as public web-based services that allow users to develop a personal profile, identify other users ("friends") with whom they have a connection, read and respond to the other's posts on the site, and chat with each other either privately or publicly (Boyd and Ellison, 2007)

Social Media can be seen as an active agent in today's scenario describing and affecting our development as human beings. It helps us in connecting with the close ones but can also deviate ourselves from us.

In their work in 2021, Lutkevich and Wigmore defined social media as a broad category encompassing websites and applications that emphasize communication, community-driven input, interaction, sharing of content, and collaborative efforts.

A study conducted by Lenhart et al., (2010) showed that 72% of all college students had a social media profile with 45% of college students using a social media site at least once a day.

Auxier and Anderson analysed Social Media Use in 2021 and found that the age group of 18 to 24 reported using Instagram (76%), Snapchat (75%) or TikTok (55%).

A systematic study conducted by Karim et al., (2020) evaluated 16 papers to analyse the effects of social network usage on mental health. Social media activity, like time spent, was found to have a positive effect on the mental health domain.

Narcissism
Narcissism is a term used to define the obsession with self however, its literal meaning has been a topic of discussion for psychologists since always.

The term Narcissism coined by Ellis (1898) was applied to auto-eroticism: a sexual perversion where the person takes himself as a sexual object. In psychoanalytic theory, Freud (1913) explained these as manifestations of the libidinal investment of the self in infancy, and their occurrence in primitives as an infantile libidinal fixation.

Moore and Fine (1967) defined narcissism as a concentration of psychological interest in the self.

Narcissism has been a part of many studies recently due to the increasing surge of mental health issues and comorbidities among youth and young adults. It is a concept that helps in understanding the aetiology of issues and also contributes to the identification and proper diagnosis of detected problems.

The early Twentieth Century threw a light on the Psychoanalytic School of Psychology founded by Sigmund Freud who gave Psychosexual stages to explain how the early development of children determines their grown personality. While explaining these stages, he gave the concept of narcissism which caused fixation in children inhibiting their healthy growth.

After Freud, it was Kohut whose Self Psychology explained this concept further. According to him, Narcissism was a motivating organiser of development in which an individual's self-love precedes others.

Bajwa, Batool and Abid conducted (2016) research to study the relationship of narcissism with family relationships. The study findings showed a significant negative relationship between narcissism and family relationship. Further, gender differences were found in the level of narcissism and family relationships concluding that narcissism was high in males than females.

Ritter et al., (2011) conducted research that included 47 patients with NPD, 53 healthy controls, and 27 clinical controls with borderline personality disorder (BPD) with the objective of empirically assessing empathy in patients having a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). The results found that the individuals with NPD displayed significant impairments in emotional empathy.

If we are to understand Narcissism through the concept of self-acceptance, it is important to understand the variables before it, which start from self-acceptance, followed by self-love and self-obsession which in turn grows into Narcissism.

Self-Love and Self-Obsession
Self-Love refers to positive feelings about oneself, unconditional self-acceptance of ourselves as a person, as well as respecting and treating oneself as a worthy person.

Jourard (1958) suggested that a self-loving individual "will be concerned with his own growth and happiness and will behave in ways which implement these values". This definition highlights the human tendency of self-actualisation and making it a priority to achieve happiness in life.

Self-love can be described as promoting one's true self and abiding by the values one believes in, it is a phenomenon where Individual respects and validates their needs and feelings in a way which helps them in achieving their goals and also helps in building resilience as well as their overall wellbeing.

According to Underwood (2020), The consensus definition of self-love was constructed largely with components of self-care, self-worth, self-acceptance, and unconditional positive self-regard.

As mentioned by Freedman (1995), self-love is a component of self-esteem where an individual finds themselves worthy and deserving because they believe in themselves and their ability.

In Today's Generation, most of the youth confuse the concept of self-love with self-obsession. It is important to determine a minor but huge difference between self-obsession and self-love. In his work in 1956, Fromm made a distinction between self-love, selfishness, and narcissism, asserting that these concepts are not synonymous and, in fact, represent contrasting ideas. Fromm argued that selfishness and self-love should be regarded as opposites rather than identical.

Self-obsession also called Narcissism shares small similarities but large differences with the concept of Self Love.

While self-obsession can blur your vision of yourself, self-love actually directs you towards the right growth and direction. It should be necessary always to remind oneself to evaluate the rights and wrongs of a situation through an objective viewpoint before taking a decision. The tendency of staying more on social media has a greater impact on our self-concepts as proven by many studies. The study focuses on how the amount of social media usage is associated with the development of self-obsession or narcissism.

Purpose
The purpose is to study the correlation between the usage of social media and narcissism among young adults falling into the age range of 18 - 25 years.

Hypothesis
There is a significant positive correlation between Narcissism and Social Media Usage

METHODOLOGY
Sample
The quantitative research design was employed in this study through the survey method including an online questionnaire made through google forms for data collection. A total of 106 people participated across Delhi in the study. The age of the subjects ranges from 18 to 25 years. Most of the sample consisted of college-going students enrolled in their undergraduate program.

Measures
The questionnaire consisted of 3 sections. The first section consisted of preliminary questions like name, age, and where they live. The second section consisted of Narcissistic Personality Inventory. The third section included Online Cognition Scale.

- **Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI):** The **Narcissistic Personality Inventory** (**NPI**) developed in 1979 by Raskin and Hall consists of 40 items arranged in the form or agreeable or disagreeable statements of the Likert scale. The NPI is a self-report questionnaire and typically takes around 10-15 minutes to complete. Each

item presents a statement about the person's attitudes or behaviours, and the individual is asked to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement.

- **Online Cognition Scale:** Online Cognition Scale (Davis et al., 2002) is a measure of problematic internet use. The 36-item scale measures cognition about problematic internet use by a 7-point Likert scale wherein, respondents express the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the scale items.

Procedure

The goal of the study was explained to the participants, and the questionnaires were completed using Google Forms. Each participant was acknowledged for their participation. The subjects were assessed using Standardized Psychological Tests.

Analysis Of Data

The responses of participants were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation to see the effects of social media usage among a sample of young adults. The Mean and Standard deviation data are presented in Table 1, table 2 shows the correlation between analyses of Social Media Usage and Narcissism.

RESULT

Table 1: N, Mean and SD of variables

	N	Mean	SD
Online Cognitive scale	106	130	33.04
Narcissism	106	16.3	6.39

Table 2: shows the correlation between Online cognitive scale and Narcissism

		Online Cognitive scale	Narcissism
Online Cognitive scale	Pearson's r	——	——
	p-value	——	
Narcissism	Pearson's r	**0.217***	——
	p-value	0.014	——

Note. H_a is a positive correlation; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, one-tailed

DISCUSSION

The results found that there is a significant positive correlation between social media usage and Narcissism ($r=0.217$, $p<.05$), Hence, the hypothesis that narcissism is positively correlated with Usage of Social Media.

A study conducted by Susanto et al (2021) aimed to discover the relationship between narcissism, self-esteem, and social media addiction in preclinical medical students. A sample of 211 preclinical medical students from the University of Indonesia. The results of the study There was a significant relationship between narcissism and social media addiction and between self-esteem and social media addiction. This indicates the importance of preliminary psychological screening in students, especially regarding self-esteem, narcissism, and social media addiction, to develop approaches that will ensure good academic achievements and physical health among students.

A study conducted by Singh et al (2018) aimed to explore the association between different dimensions of narcissism and selfie posting and other self-promoting behaviours on social media. A sample of 124 participants completed an online survey assessing their narcissistic traits and social media use. The results of the study showed that global narcissism is significantly associated with various social media behaviours, including the frequency of selfie posting, perceived attractiveness of selfies, and tagging, commenting, and liking behaviours. The association between social media behaviours and different dimensions of narcissism was also examined, and Grandiose Exhibitionism was found to be most consistently associated with social media behaviours.

A study conducted by Mohan (2018) aimed at examining how narcissism is manifested on a social networking Website. A sample of 311 participants filled out a questionnaire that examined their contingencies of self-worth as well as what their typical behaviours were on Facebook. The results of the study showed that basic demographics, narcissism, and self-esteem are all associated with addiction to social media.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

In the current study, a sample of 106 participants in the age group of 18-25, has been studied to examine the effect of social media usage on narcissistic personality among young adults across various colleges. Standardized scales were used to measure Narcissism and Social Media Use in young adults. After analysis, a significant positive correlation was found between narcissism and the use of social media.

Various approaches can be adopted to balance out the use of social media. Certain In-built App features like a Daily timer on Instagram which tracks your usage time and notifies the user when it's time to switch off the app should be included more in applications and as well as in games to alert the user when they are surpassing their per day limit of the screen/online time.

Pomodoro techniques can be used to figure out a plan for the day with minimum screen time and a healthy as well as productive routine. Certain Free Applications that can be used for the same are Forest App, Pomo Focus, Focusmeter and many more.

Increasing offline social time through joining social groups and committees and engaging in healthy hobbies as per individual's interests and capacity for replacing their online presence. Rather than looking for validation from others, one should focus more on self-appreciation and reinforcements so that their control of behaviour and worth is not driven by others. Few Self-appreciation techniques can reward oneself when achieving even a small victory, emphasising one's accomplishments rather than focusing on shortcomings.

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