

Examining the Effect of Use of Social Media on Self-Esteem of Young Adults

Dr. Atika Tewari^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Internet and social media have become an important part of our day-to-day life. **Objective** was to investigate the relation between hours spend on social media and individual's self-esteem level, taking into account both positive and negative self-evaluation. **Hypothesis** assumed that there is no significant relation between use of social media and self-esteem. Researcher was curious to explore how social media engagement influences the self-esteem of young adults aged 18-25, drawing from a **Sample** of 150 individuals equally divided between genders from Uttaranchal University. The tools used, where Internet Addiction Test and Self-esteem Inventory were used, the study investigates the relationship between social media use and self-esteem. **Results** reveals a significant detrimental correlation between social media activity and self-esteem among young adults. Regardless of gender, higher level of social media engagement is associated with lower self-esteem scores. The findings underscore the importance of promoting critical media literacy skills and cultivating healthy online behaviours to mitigate negative consequences. This research highlights the need for interventions and educational initiatives aimed at fostering positive self-perception the face of social media influences.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Social Media, Internet Addiction*

Social media has completely changed the game for marketing, and it's still gaining steam according to the latest stats for 2024. These platforms are like bustling virtual hangouts, where brands can connect with their audience in real time. And they're not just static places- they're always evolving to fit different groups of people and changing trends. Recent research tells us that a whopping 62.3% of people worldwide are on social media, and spend an average of 2 hours and 23 minutes there every day. That's a lot of scrolling and tapping! And the numbers keep growing. In just the past year, we've seen 266 million new users join the party, bringing the total to over 5.04 billion users worldwide. Even though people are spending slightly less time on social media each day (just 4 minutes less), the number of users keeps skyrocketing.

Self-esteem refers to a person's evaluation of their own worth. Global self-esteem is the most common type, which is a broad and consciously accessible form of self-evaluation. It is considered important by psychologists because it reflects a person's level of acceptance or

¹Assistant Professor, Uttaranchal University, Dehradun

*Corresponding Author

Received: June 19, 2024; Revision Received: June 27, 2024; Accepted: June 30, 2024

Examining the Effect of Use of Social Media on Self-Esteem of Young Adults

cultural value. People tend to pursue and maintain high self-esteem through various means. Although self-esteem levels can fluctuate throughout life and are influenced by experiences of acceptance, most people have reasonably high levels of it. Despite the long-held belief that a person's level of self-esteem determines many aspects of life, such as interpersonal relationships, well-being, and certain psychopathologies, the evidence is conflicting and not applicable to all outcomes. Self-esteem level is not as significant as self-esteem fragility or narcissism for a number of outcomes. To guide therapeutic therapy, it might be helpful to comprehend the complexity of self-esteem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study conducted by Seinje Steinbeck et al. (2021) titled "The impact of social media use on appearance self-esteem from childhood to adolescence - A 3-wave community study" involved 725 children aged 10, 12, and 14. The study found that increased other-oriented social media use was associated with decreased appearance self-esteem in girls over time, although self-oriented social media use did not have the same impact. The study did not find a reverse influence from appearance and self-esteem to social media use. Overall, the findings highlight the negative impact of other-oriented social media use on appearance and self-esteem during childhood and adolescence.

The present study, conducted by Fardouly et al. 2015, Negative comparisons about one's appearance mediate the relationship between Facebook usage and body image concerns. The study examined how female university students' use of Facebook is related to their body image concerns. The researchers found that there is a positive relationship between Facebook usage and body image concerns. They also found that comparing their appearance to others and making upward comparisons (thinking that their appearance is worse than others') to distant peers and celebrities also played a role in this relationship.

The study by Datta et al. (2024) in 'Psycho-social effects of social media & peer pressure on body image' examines how media and social media impact body image and mental health, using interview-method research with individuals aged 15 to 25 who regularly use social media. The qualitative approach involved in-depth interviews and thematic analyses leading to insights into the impact of social media and peers' pressure on body image. Participants expressed a range of beliefs about the impact of social media. Factors emphasized for developing a healthy body image include parental guidance, positive peer influence, self-acceptance, and balanced media content promoting well-being. Participants stressed the importance of individual responsibility, self-love, and personal growth strategies for improving body image in the context of contemporary media influences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Independent Variable

- Social media
- Gender

Dependent Variable

- Self-esteem

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relation between internet addiction as well as use of social media and self-esteem between young adults.

Examining the Effect of Use of Social Media on Self-Esteem of Young Adults

Sample

The data was collected on the sample of 150 boys and girls participated in this study. Out of 150, 75 females and 75 males were selected that fell within the criteria according to the IAT guidelines. Sample was drawn from different ages from 18 to 25 years of age. It was collected from Dehradun. The stratified random sampling technique was used to assign male and female college students with mild and moderate internet addiction into appropriate groups.

Inclusion Criteria

- Participant's aging from 18-25 years.
- College students who were engaged to internet usage for last 6 months.
- Student having Internet access at their home.

Tools Used

- **The Internet Addiction Test by Dr. Kimberly S. Young 1998** The Internet Addiction Test used in the present study was developed by Dr. Kimberly S. Young. The 20-item questionnaire measures characteristics and behaviours associated with compulsive use of the internet, including compulsivity, escapism, and dependency. Participants respond to each statement with a number between 1 and 5, representing a Likert-scale continuum, indicating the extent to which they display that particular behaviour. The validity of the IAT has shown ($\alpha = 0.90-0.93$) and good test-retest reliability of 0.85.
- **The Self-Esteem Inventory by M.S. Prasad and G.P. Thakur** The self-esteem inventory used in the present study was developed by M.S. Prasad and G.P. Thakur (1971). The questionnaire determines two aspects of self-esteem. It consists of 30 items in each aspect and were rated as 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 respectively. The first part of the test which determines personally-perceived self consists of 30 items and the later part of the test which determines socially-perceived self consists of 30 items. Total scores of each part can be obtained by their summation. The reliability coefficients for self-perception and social perception are 0.82 and 0.78, respectively. The self-esteem inventory's validity was assessed based on face and content validity.

Procedure

This included construction of the consent form which was filled up by all the participants before inclusion in the research. After taking the demographic details, data was collected from the participants. On the basis of IAT the mild and moderate internet addiction groups were identified. Rapport was formed and data was collected on Self-esteem inventory. All the participants were assured that the information obtained would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes. Researcher also thanked the participants for their sincere involvement and the time they devoted for this research.

Research Design

An exploratory study was conducted to examine the self-esteem levels. As the present research was having two independent variables each having two levels, therefore, 2*2 factorial design was applied. Data was analysed and interpreted with the help of Analysis of Variance (Two-way ANOVA), mean and SD were applied to meet the objective and test the hypotheses of the study.

DISCUSSION

According to this study, the prevalence of the Internet and social media in the lives of young girls is causing them to question their own abilities and worth. The study suggests that the constant comparison to their peers and societal standards on these platforms is gradually eroding their self-confidence and self-esteem.

The findings reveal a meaningful connection between Internet Addiction and self-esteem among young adult men between the ages of 18 and 25. The statistical significance of the F value at p indicates that the results are not likely to be the product of chance. These results suggest that when males are exposed to social media frequently, they may feel the need to conform to unrealistic beauty and lifestyle standards that don't align with their own personal values. This pressure can gradually take a toll on their self-worth, leading to a decline in their confidence and self-esteem. Hence, the hypothesis made earlier was not supported by the obtained results.

CONCLUSION

The study looks at both the benefits and shortcomings of the use of social media in order to determine how young adults in India see their bodies and their self-worth. Social media has democratized access to information and increased connectedness, but it has also increased the prevalence of cyberbullying and mental health issues. By examining factors such as gender, time spent on social media, and media education interventions, the study aims to understand the correlation between social media use and self-esteem.

The study's findings suggest that among girls, boys, and young adults, there are substantial connections between social media use, internet addiction, and self-esteem. Notwithstanding, the study's limitations—namely, its small sample size and its regional focus within India indicate the necessity for more comprehensive demographic considerations.

Gender differences, however, in accordance with the findings, do exist in the levels of self-esteem. Females, as compared to males, scored significantly lower in the self-esteem inventory. These findings do align with the existing literature which studied the gender differences in levels of self-esteem.

The present study found no interactional effect of internet addiction and gender on self-esteem. This implies that there were no significant differences in the impact that internet addiction has on self-esteem on both males and females. Thus, it indicates that the impact of internet addiction on self-esteem functions independently of gender differences in young adults.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample incorporated for the present study was very limited for generalizations.
- The study was conducted on young adults (18-25).
- The sample size taken from the population was small, and the population was limited only to northern India.
- The present study was conducted on urban population which cannot be generalized for rural population as well as adult population
- In the present study, only one aspect was studied, internet addiction and self-esteem, no attempt has been made to study parenting, family environment, quality of life and personality correlates of internet addiction.

Suggestions for Further Research

- Further study can also be undertaken on a large sample size.
- The study may also be conducted over a larger geographical domain as well.
- Other variables like bullying, locus of control, maladaptive cognition, academic stress and parenting might also be included.
- This study focuses on the young generation (college students) but not on adults. Further research could be conducted to study impact of social media on adults and on other age groups.

REFERENCES

- Datta, S., Guria, P., Mondal, K., & Mitra, N. (2024). Psycho-Social Effects of Social Media & Peer Pressure on Body Image. *International Journal of Pharmaceuticals Research*, 6(1), 17-21.
- Fardouly, J., & Vartanian, L. R. (2015). Negative Comparisons about One's Appearance Mediate the Relationship Between Facebook Usage and Body Image Concerns. *Body Image*, 12, 82-88.
- Shahi, S. P., & Thakur, G. P. (1978). Self-Esteem in Subjects High, Middle and Low in Anxiety. *Journal of Psychological Researches*, 22(2), 111-117.
- Steinsbekk, S., Wichstrom, L., Stenseng, F., Nesi, J., Hygen, B. W., & Skalicka, V. (2021). The Impact of Social Media Use on Appearance Self-Esteem from Childhood to Adolescence-A 3wave Community Study. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 114, 106528.
- Young, K.S. (1998). Internet Addiction: The Emergence of a New Clinical Disorder. *Cyber psychology & Behavior*, 1(3), 237-244.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Tewari, A. (2024). Examining the Effect of Use of Social Media on Self-Esteem of Young Adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 4278-4282. DIP:18.01.384.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.384