

Research Paper

Exploring the Correlation between Self-Esteem, Social Connection, and Smartphone Use among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

To understand how psychological as well as social factors contribute to the varying patterns of behaviour, this research studies the relationship between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults. The data was, therefore, collected from 142 participants- aged between 18 and 30, either studying or employed, using the Smartphone Addiction Scale-short version, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. Results indicate a negative correlation between self-esteem and a tendency towards smartphone addiction, meaning individuals with lower self-esteem reported a higher likelihood of smartphone engagement. Although perceived social support and self-esteem were positively correlated, there is no significant association between perceived social support and smartphone use. However, since entertainment was found to be the primary reason for the use of smartphones, it could possibly reflect a lack of engagement in meaningful activities and fulfilling relationships in an individual's real world. These findings emphasize the need to reflect and be mindful of one's smartphone use, and improve the quality of relationships with oneself and others.

Keywords: *Self-Esteem, Social Support, Smartphone Use*

In this fast-moving world, it is hard to imagine living without a smartphone, especially for young adults, which makes us wonder about the contributing factors behind one's need to use the smartphones. Smartphones, despite being a tool of convenience and helping people stay socially connected worldwide, may reveal something deeper about one's emotions and social experiences. Therefore, examining the role played by self-esteem and social connection can provide deeper insights into this behavioural pattern.

Self-Esteem

Rosenberg (1979) defined self-esteem as an individual's overall sense of self-worth. He underscored its importance in influencing affect, actions, and social interactions, pointing out its connection to mental health and personal development.

People with concerningly low self-esteem may have negative self-perceptions and feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy. On the contrary, high self-esteemed individuals have a

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positive self-view, appreciate themselves more, and firmly believe in their intrinsic value as they are aware of what they bring to the table (Baumeister, 1993).

William James (1890), in the early times, proposed that individuals develop a strong sense of self-worth when they regularly achieve the goals or standards personally significant to them. Further, he mentioned that this is rather subjective and not an objective measure. Modern-day perspectives on self-esteem similarly focus on an individual's perceived rather than externally evaluated self-worth. Abraham Maslow (1943), another well-known psychologist, insisted in his famous hierarchy of needs that self-esteem is an important level of need that has to be satisfied in order to attain fulfillment. Carl Rogers (1959), a prominent humanistic theorist, viewed self-worth (or self-esteem) as a degree of alignment between one's actual self and ideal self. He believed that self-worth is shaped by the level of positive regard received unconditionally from parents and others in the form of love and acceptance. When individuals are held to unrealistic standards and thereby, feel like a failure, their perception of self-worth declines. Like Maslow, Rogers emphasized that a strong sense of self-worth is essential for facing troubles, forming healthy coping strategies, and building healthy relationships.

Improvement in the level of self-esteem requires self-compassion, questioning negative self-beliefs, and developing a realistic and positive point of view of oneself. Engaging in healthy and reflective habits like journaling, gratitude expression, and seeking supportive and meaningful relationships are effective ways to build self-esteem and enhance overall well-being (Gazella, 2023).

Social Connection

Social connections, involving the relationships and interactions individuals share with others like family, friends, romantic partners, and their community, essentially provide emotional support, nurture personal growth, and enhance mental health. Studies have shown that people with stable social networks generally experience better health, both physically and mentally, greater life satisfaction, increased happiness, and tend to live longer as opposed to those who experience social isolation often associated with anxiety and depression. Participating in meaningful discussions, sharing experiences, and giving or receiving support promotes emotional resilience (Cohen, 2004).

Building strong social relationships necessitates effort, such as active listening, empathy, and regular communication. Participating in social activities, volunteering, and fostering supportive relationships can enhance well-being. Ultimately, sustaining meaningful connections is vital for personal growth, emotional equilibrium, and overall happiness.

Smartphone Use

Smartphones function as personal assistants, communication hubs, and endless information sources. They allow individuals to stay in touch through instant messaging, social networking sites, and video calls, bridging geographical gaps. Additionally, smartphones serve as educational tools, granting access to online courses, e-books, and research materials. They also provide entertainment through streaming services, gaming, and music apps. In professional settings, smartphones enhance productivity with task management apps, calendars, and collaboration tools, making them necessary for both students and working professionals. Their ability to provide navigation assistance, online shopping, and banking services further entails its use in today's fast-paced world. However, studies suggest

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that excessive smartphone use can negatively affect mental health, increase stress and anxiety, and cause sleep disturbances (Yang et al., 2023).

The widespread use of smartphones may also raise concerns regarding overuse and addiction. Smartphone addiction is characterized by an individual's inability to control smartphone use despite its adverse effects. It is an escalating issue in the present highly interconnected world, influenced by a blend of personal, emotional, and social elements. Personal factors arise from an individual's traits and characteristics. Emotional factors involve using smartphones as a tool to uplift mood and relieve stress. Social factors pertain to online communication and interaction (Chen et al., 2023).

The consequences of smartphone addiction can be extensive, affecting various aspects of well-being. Physically, extended screen time and sedentary habits can lead to issues like eye strain, sleep issues, and obesity. Psychologically, excessive smartphone use is linked with heightened anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. Socially, addiction can pose a strain on relationships, as individuals give preference to their digital interactions over in-person connections. The constant urge to check phones can also lead to a decline in productivity and focus, impacting academic or professional performance (Alotaibi et al., 2022).

Self-Esteem and Smartphone Use

Using the smartphone too much, especially for social media, is bad for self-esteem because it encourages social comparison, unrealistic beauty standards, and the fear of missing out. Sohil et al. (2024) argued that it can also limit real-life social interactions and lead to loneliness and self-doubt. On the other hand, low self-esteem may lead to excessive smartphone use to cope, to seek validation, to be distracted or to find social connection on the internet. This cycle can continue to perpetuate dependence on digital interactions and worsen self-worth.

Casale et al. (2022) carried out a meta-analysis of self-esteem and problematic smartphone use, where numerous investigations were reviewed, and a negative correlation between the two variables was established: lower self-esteem tends to be linked with higher levels of problematic smartphone use.

Social Connection and Self-Esteem

Self-esteem and social connection are closely intertwined. Having strong social support makes an individual feel more confident, have emotional security, and a sense of belongingness which reinforces positive self-worth. By contrast, social isolation or exclusion may wreak havoc on one's self-esteem, leading to anxiety and self-doubt. Such negative experiences can thereby cause withdrawal from social gatherings, difficulty in forming relationships, and poor social skills, creating a cycle.

Poudel et al. (2020) found higher levels of perceived social support to be correlated with heightened self-esteem, which subsequently improved psychological well-being. This suggests that self-esteem serves as a significant mediating factor in the relationship between social support and mental health, underscoring the necessity of cultivating supportive environments to elevate adolescents' self-esteem and overall well-being.

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Smartphone Use and Social Connection

Smartphones have provided us with great opportunities for connections worldwide, be it maintaining an existing relation or forming a new one. It helps individuals with limited offline interactions to reach out online and experience a sense of social support. However, relying more on virtual interactions may hamper one's social skills in real life resulting in skin-deep connections. Doom-scrolling and getting distracted easily by notifications might impose barriers to having meaningful in-person conversations. This may make an individual feel that they are an active part of society by being online but may miss out on events around and feel more detached from the people present around, ultimately impacting the quality of relationships and emotional well-being. It is, however, also important to consider that unmet needs in relationships in real life or the presence of toxicity among partners or friends or families may make an individual rely more on smartphones as a means of escape or gratification.

Das et al. (2024) examined the influence of smartphones on young people's social relationships, revealing reduced face-to-face interactions and decreased sense of emotional intimacy in social bonds. People living away from phones were able to contact their parents regularly via phones but reported a preference for in-person connection for serious conversations, guidance, and problem-solving. This research conveys a need for balancing offline and online interactions to enhance relationship quality and overall well-being.

Self-Esteem, Social Connection, and Smartphone Use

Self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use share a complicated yet significant relationship. Individuals possessing high self-esteem with stable and supportive connections around may depend less on their smartphones for substantiation of their meaningful existence.

Social Compensation theory (Valkenburg and Peter, 2009) suggests that individuals who have low self-esteem make up for poor real-world relationships by using smartphones excessively. Looking for affirmation and a sense of community online may offer short-term comfort, but can strengthen feelings of loneliness and dependence, and further diminish face-to-face interactions.

Yogesh et al. (2024) studied 560 Indian adolescents between 15-19 years of age, revealing a 64.6% prevalence of smartphone addiction strongly linked with urban housing, above-average socioeconomic background, non-authoritative parenting style, and deteriorations in mental health. The narrow age group of 15 to 19 excludes young adults above 20 years of age, which is the limitation of this study.

Tater and John (2024) conducted a study that explored smartphone addiction's impact on 446 Indian students' well-being, revealing moderate addiction as common, with higher addiction levels linked to dependency, overuse, and withdrawal. A limitation of this study is that it did not consider the influence of variables like family dynamics.

Agrawal et al. (2024) investigated internet addiction among 185 Indian students, revealing its association with loneliness and psychological distress. Higher addiction was associated with social media use, whereas academic use exhibited a negative correlation. Diminished generalizability due to concentration on first-year medical students from a single institution as well as the omission of protective factors such as a supportive family environment or

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extracurricular activities that may alleviate internet addiction, were the limitations of this study.

Rathi et al. (2022) compared family dynamics, personality traits such as temperament and character alongside psychopathology in 1,000 urban middle-class adolescents with or without internet addiction. Addicted adolescents showed impulsivity, low persistence, conduct problems, and depression, belonging to dysfunctional families with poor communication, problem-solving, and emotional responsiveness. However, as a limitation, the role of friends was not considered.

Reddy (2019) examined the effect of excess internet use on the social and emotional skills of 100 young adults aged 18-25. According to the results, while the internet helps in building social connections, compulsive internet use is linked with poorer social and emotional skills in real life, meaning a decline in young adults' in-person conversations and emotional regulation. However, the influence of social support systems was not measured.

Anand et al. (2018) studied 1,086 Indian engineering students, finding internet addiction linked to psychological distress, especially depression. Males, frequent users, and those spending 3+ hours online were more affected. A primary constraint is the absence of generalizability, as the research concentrated solely on students of engineering background from a particular region, not considering other academic disciplines, regions, and socio-economic status.

Kumar and Mondal (2018) conducted a research study to examine the relationship between internet addiction, psychopathology, and self-esteem among 200 college students in Kolkata. The findings revealed that elevated levels of internet addiction were significantly associated with heightened symptoms of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal sensitivity. Moreover, a negative correlation was found between internet addiction and self-esteem, indicating that students with higher internet addiction tend to have lower self-esteem. Since the study relies on self-reported psychological symptoms, it lacks clinical judgement affecting accuracy.

Rationale of the Study

Young adults' smartphone usage can be understood by studying the factors that may contribute to it. Psychological factors like self-esteem and social factors like perceived social support may make or break one's engagement in smartphones. Addressing the limitations of previous researches, this study considers the role of various dimensions under social support, including friends, family, and significant other, along with one's measure of self-worth, in relation to smartphone use. Also, unlike studies that focused solely on addiction and psychological distress, this research rather emphasizes the protective and positive role of social connections and self-perception. Although it does not imply any direct cause-and-effect relationship, it is meaningful in identifying patterns. The insights gained will help raise awareness and encourage individuals to be more mindful of their smartphone use, and improve their self-esteem and quality of social relationships, ultimately promoting a healthier and happier lifestyle.

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METHOD

Aim

To examine the correlation between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults in India, exploring the protective role of psychological and social factors in the varying levels of smartphone use.

Research Problem

- Can an individual's self-esteem relate to their smartphone use?
- How is perceived social connection associated with one's engagement in smartphone use?
- What is the relationship between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use?

Variables in the Study

- Independent variables: Self-esteem and Social connection
- Dependent variable: Smartphone use
- Controlled variables: Age and Gender

Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between self-esteem and smartphone use among young adults.
2. To assess the relationship between social connection and self-esteem among young adults.
3. To examine the association between social connection and smartphone use among young adults.
4. To explore the correlation between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant correlation between self-esteem and smartphone use among young adults.
2. There is a significant correlation between social connection and self-esteem among young adults.
3. There is a significant correlation between social connection and smartphone use among young adults.
4. There is a significant relationship between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults.

Research Design

This study employed a correlational research design to investigate the link between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults in India. Data was collected at a single point in time through an online survey utilizing standardized psychological scales to measure the variables.

Sample

The study sample comprised 142 young adults (Males=71; and Females=71) aged 18 to 30 years from India who were either students or employed individuals. Participants were selected using a snowball sampling technique, where initial participants referred others to join the study, ensuring a diverse and relevant sample.

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Inclusion criteria:

Participants included in the study were required to be between 18 and 30 years of age, currently engaged in education or employment, and living either alone, with family, or with friends/roommates. These criteria ensured the sample represented young adults with structured social and professional environments.

Exclusion criteria:

Individuals below 18 or above 30 years of age, those who were unemployed or not enrolled in any educational institution, and individuals who did not provide informed consent, were excluded from the study. Furthermore, individuals diagnosed with mental illness or those with cognitive or psychological impairments that could hinder meaningful participation were also excluded to ensure data accuracy and participant well-being.

Tools Used

1. **SAS-SV.** The Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short Version is a 6-point Likert scale developed by Kwon, Kim, Cho, & Yang in 2013, assessing problematic smartphone use, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 6(strongly agree), a higher score would indicate addiction or high risk of smartphone addiction and vice versa. It has a high internal consistency of 0.91 (Kwon et al., 2013).
2. **RSE.** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, is used to measure one's feelings about self. It consists of 10 statements, wherein 5 are negatively worded (2,5,6,8,9) and hence scored reversely. This scale has a 4-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1(strongly agree) to 4(strongly disagree). On reversing the total scores, a low score indicates low self-esteem and vice versa. The RSE scale has high reliability, including internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Rosenberg, 1965).
3. **MSPSS.** The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley in the year 1988, is a 7-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1(very strongly disagree) to 7(very strongly agree), consisting of 12 statements total, having three subscales- friends, family, and significant other, to measure the perceived social support. A high score reflects greater perceived social support and vice versa. It has a good internal consistency reliability of 0.88 (Zimet et al., 1998).

Procedure

To recruit the participants, an online Google form was circulated among friends and family, and they further sent the form to their knowns to ensure ease of access and anonymity. The survey included demographic details such as age, gender, occupation status, living scenario, type of content consumed on smartphones, and hours spent on smartphones, along with standardized psychological scales. SAS-SV was used to measure the level of smartphone use, self-esteem was measured through the RSE scale, and social connection was evaluated using the MSPSS. Before proceeding with the questions, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided with an online consent form.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed using JASP software to examine the possible correlation between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the data, followed by Pearson's correlation analysis to assess the associations among the variables.

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RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of Age, Gender, Occupation, Living Scenario, No. of hours spent, Type of content consumed, SAS-SV Total, RSE Total, SO Total, Family Total, and FRIENDS Total

Descriptive Statistics

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
AGE	142	0	22.063	2.851	1.007	0.203	0.192	0.404	18.000	30.000
GENDER	142	0	1.500	0.502	0.000	0.203	-2.029	0.404	1.000	2.000
OCCUPATION	142	0	1.373	0.485	0.530	0.203	-1.744	0.404	1.000	2.000
LIVING SCENARIO	142	0	1.310	0.609	1.815	0.203	2.073	0.404	1.000	3.000
NO. OF HRS SPENT ONLINE	142	0	2.113	0.695	-0.155	0.203	-0.912	0.404	1.000	3.000
TYPE OF CONTENT CONSUMED	142	0	2.176	0.802	0.759	0.203	0.443	0.404	1.000	4.000
SAS-SV TOTAL	142	0	31.570	9.204	0.270	0.203	0.214	0.404	10.000	56.000
RSE TOTAL	142	0	17.099	4.676	-0.509	0.203	1.510	0.404	0.000	30.000
SO TOTAL	142	0	19.232	6.241	-0.334	0.203	-0.823	0.404	4.000	28.000
FAMILY TOTAL	142	0	19.549	5.907	-0.506	0.203	-0.392	0.404	4.000	28.000
FRIENDS TOTAL	142	0	20.063	5.980	-0.881	0.203	0.396	0.404	4.000	28.000

Table 1 shows that the dataset comprised 142 valid responses with no missing values across variables. The mean age of participants, ranging from 18 to 30 years, was 22.06 years, where SD=2.85. The sample had an equal number of males and females, which was 71 each.

Among categorical values, under occupation, the mean score was 1.37 (SD=0.49) which means the collected data has a higher proportion of students (coded as 1) than employed (coded as 2). As indicated by the mean score of 1.31 and SD=0.16 for the current living scenario (highly skewed and peaked), most participants lived with family (coded as 1), followed by those living with friends (coded as 2) or alone (coded as 3). The mean score for the number of hours spent online was 2.11 (SD=0.69) representing that most participants spent 2-5 hours online daily (coded as 2). The type of content consumed had a mean score of 2.18 (SD=0.80), indicating a higher tendency for participants to engage with entertainment-related content (coded as 2) over other categories such as self-improvement, work-related, or a combination of all.

Additionally, under psychological scales, the mean score of 31.57 (SD=9.20) SAS-SV Total reflects a tendency for developing a smartphone addiction among young adults. The RSE Total had a mean score of 17.10 (SD=4.68) indicating an average level of self-esteem among young adults. The MSPSS had sub-scales; wherein significant others (SO Total) had a mean value of 19.23 (SD=6.24), family (FAMILY Total) had a mean of 19.55 and SD of 5.91, and friends (FRIENDS Total) had a mean of 20.06 (SD=5.98). This indicates above average level of perceived social support among young adults. The data range for SAS-SV Total was 10-56, while self-esteem scores ranged from 0-30. Social support scores for significant others, family, and friends all ranged between 4 and 28.

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Table 2. Pearson's correlation analysis between Age, Gender, No. of hours spent, SAS-SV Total, RSE Total, SO Total, FAMILY Total, and FRIENDS Total

Pearson's Correlations ▼		AGE	GENDER	NO. OF HRS SPENT ONLINE	SAS-SV TOTAL	RSE TOTAL	SO TOTAL	FAMILY TOTAL	FRIENDS TOTAL
1. AGE	Pearson's r	—							
	p-value	—							
	Lower 95% CI	—							
	Upper 95% CI	—							
2. GENDER	Pearson's r	-0.364***	—						
	p-value	< .001							
	Lower 95% CI	-0.499							
	Upper 95% CI	-0.212							
3. NO. OF HRS SPENT ONLINE	Pearson's r	-0.215*	0.081	—					
	p-value	0.010	0.336						
	Lower 95% CI	-0.366	-0.085						
	Upper 95% CI	-0.052	0.243						
4. SAS-SV TOTAL	Pearson's r	-0.050	0.045	0.342***	—				
	p-value	0.552	0.592	< .001					
	Lower 95% CI	-0.213	-0.120	0.188					
	Upper 95% CI	0.115	0.208	0.480					
5. RSE TOTAL	Pearson's r	0.173*	-0.151	-0.075	-0.195*	—			
	p-value	0.039	0.073	0.372	0.020				
	Lower 95% CI	0.009	-0.308	-0.237	-0.348				
	Upper 95% CI	0.329	0.014	0.090	-0.031				
6. SO TOTAL	Pearson's r	-0.077	0.099	0.063	0.058	0.249**	—		
	p-value	0.360	0.243	0.460	0.491	0.003			
	Lower 95% CI	-0.239	-0.067	-0.103	-0.107	0.088			
	Upper 95% CI	0.088	0.259	0.225	0.221	0.397			
7. FAMILY TOTAL	Pearson's r	0.104	-0.048	-0.200*	-0.089	0.317***	0.429***	—	
	p-value	0.220	0.572	0.017	0.291	< .001	< .001		
	Lower 95% CI	-0.062	-0.211	-0.353	-0.250	0.161	0.284		
	Upper 95% CI	0.264	0.118	-0.036	0.077	0.458	0.554		
8. FRIENDS TOTAL	Pearson's r	-0.054	0.074	0.044	-0.009	0.245**	0.527***	0.380***	—
	p-value	0.524	0.379	0.601	0.920	0.003	< .001	< .001	
	Lower 95% CI	-0.217	-0.091	-0.121	-0.173	0.084	0.396	0.229	
	Upper 95% CI	0.112	0.236	0.208	0.156	0.394	0.636	0.512	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2 shows the relationship between self-esteem, social connection, smartphone use, and demographic details using Pearson's correlation analysis. Age shows a negative correlation with the number of hours spent online ($r = -0.215$, $p = .010$), which means that younger participants spend more time online. No significant difference was noticed between the males and females across the research.

A significant negative correlation was observed between SAS-SV Total and self-esteem ($r = -0.195$, $p = .020$), suggesting that individuals with lower self-esteem reported higher levels of problematic smartphone use.

Self-esteem (RSE Total) showed several correlations. It was positively correlated with significant other support ($r = 0.249$, $p = .003$), family support ($r = 0.317$, $p < .001$), and friends support ($r = 0.245$, $p = .003$), indicating that higher self-esteem was associated with stronger perceived social support across all three domains.

Among the social support variables, strong positive correlations were observed between significant other support and family support ($r = 0.429$, $p < .001$), significant other support and friends support ($r = 0.380$, $p < .001$), and family support and friends support ($r = 0.527$, $p < .001$), reflecting that individuals who reported strong support in one domain tended to perceive greater support in others as well.

No significant correlations were found between SAS-SV Total and any of the social support variables.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to explore the correlation between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults, emphasizing the role of psychological and social factors on varying levels of smartphone use.

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This sample reflects a population that is at the age of experiencing a shift in their views towards the world, navigating their ways through life, a phase marked by academic expectations, career ambiguity, and emerging social responsibilities. The composition of all participants, majorly being students and living with parents, aligns with the Indian culture where young adults often reside with their parents during the academic years. Despite the lack of evidence for a significant correlation between occupation and smartphone use, an average 2-5 hours consumption of smartphones could possibly indicate smartphones are an accessible means for coping with daily stressors during this transitional phase in life often present with stress, procrastination and multi-tasking by both students and working professionals. Since entertainment is the primary reason to use smartphones for most of the participants, it could reflect a lack of stimulation and engagement in fulfilling activities in real life. For this reason, they may seek instant dopamine rush via smartphones.

A significant negative correlation was found between self-esteem and smartphone use, indicating that low self-esteem young adults reported higher smartphone engagement, also supported by the negative correlation between self-esteem and number of hours spent online, indicating a proneness to longer duration of screen time in low self-esteem individuals. Similar results were found by Edwards et al. (2022). Hence, hypothesis 1 is proved. A significant positive correlation was found between social connection across significant other, family, and friends, and self-esteem, highlighting that healthy social connections help improve young adults' self-esteem reinforcing the protective role of strong social support, as also supported in the study by Maddy III et al. (2015). Hence, hypothesis 2 is proved. Since no significant correlation was found between social connection and smartphone use, hypothesis 3 was rejected. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported but not completely proven. One possible inference could be made that social connections positively correlate with self-esteem which further negatively correlates with smartphone use, explaining an indirect relationship between social connection and smartphone usage. Moreover, this study also implies that participants, despite having good social connections in real life, depend on smartphones for entertainment or distraction.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights key associations between self-esteem, social connection, and smartphone use among young adults. The negative correlation between self-esteem and smartphone use particularly for entertainment, may talk about an individual's behavior of avoidance of self-reflection, fear of emotional vulnerability, and seeking instant gratification. Regardless of individuals reporting supportive social networks, they may consume digital content for comfort and distraction, possibly not feeling much attached to people around. According to the findings, the possibility of psychological susceptibilities and habitual behaviors, rather than just social interactions, may contribute to using smartphones.

Limitations

A small sample size of just 142 participants may limit generalizability across the country's young adults. Although the type of content consumed (entertainment, self-improvement, work-related) was taken into account, they were not measured using a standardized scale. Also, this study does not explore the exact psychological motives behind smartphone use, like dealing with stress, social approval, or the inability to do nothing and sit idle for a while.

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Future Implications

Given these insights, future research could be developed regarding the interventions for enriching one's self-esteem and engaging in meaningful real-life activities to replace passive indulgence. Moreover, understanding the underlying emotional drivers could suggest exact areas for improvement, ultimately leading to more self-awareness and a fulfilling life.

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Conflict of Interest

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