



Unveiling The Influence Of Social Media Addiction: Exploring Its Impact On Self-Esteem And Anxiety Levels In Young Adults.

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of social media addiction on anxiety levels and self-esteem among young adults. Through a quantitative analysis of 154 participants, the study examines the correlations between social media usage, anxiety levels, and self-esteem. The findings reveal significant relationships between these variables, indicating potential implications for mental health interventions targeting young adults.

The results demonstrate a positive correlation (39.5%) between social media addiction and anxiety levels, supporting the hypothesis that increased social media usage is associated with higher levels of anxiety among young adults. Additionally, a negative correlation (39.8%) is observed between social media addiction and self-esteem, confirming the hypothesis that excessive engagement with social media platforms is linked to decreased self-esteem.

Furthermore, the study reveals a negative correlation (34.1%) between self-esteem levels and anxiety levels in the context of social media. This suggests that individuals with lower self-esteem are more prone to experiencing heightened anxiety levels when engaging with social media platforms.

Overall, these findings underscore the intricate relationship between social media addiction, anxiety levels, and self-esteem among young adults. The implications of these correlations are discussed in the context of existing research, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive social media usage on mental health.

Introduction

Social media has emerged as a pivotal aspect of modern communication, reshaping how individuals connect and interact with one another. While it offers unprecedented opportunities for virtual socialization and information sharing, concerns about its impact on individual well-being have increasingly garnered attention within the field of psychology. One significant area of inquiry revolves around its influence on self-esteem, a fundamental aspect of psychological health.

Research findings regarding the relationship between social media use and self-esteem are varied and sometimes contradictory. Some studies suggest a positive correlation between social media engagement and self-esteem, highlighting how individuals may derive validation and social support from their online interactions (Müller et al., 2016). However, other research indicates a negative association, with excessive social media use linked to feelings of inadequacy, social comparison, and diminished self-worth (Błachnio et al., 2016). Additionally, there are studies that report no discernible relationship between social media use and self-esteem (Duggan et al., 2015).

Self-esteem, as defined by Martin et al. (2014), encompasses an individual's overall evaluation of their worth and significance. It plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive themselves and navigate their social environments. High self-esteem is associated with resilience to negative feedback and better social adjustment, whereas low self-esteem may predispose individuals to heightened sensitivity to criticism and negative evaluation (Brown & Mankowski, 1993).

Furthermore, among adolescents, particularly girls, self-perceived physical appearance emerges as a significant factor influencing self-esteem (Harter, 2012; von Soest et al., 2016). In the context of social media, where visual representations and curated images abound, the pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards may exacerbate body image concerns and impact self-esteem.

Despite the growing body of research on social media and self-esteem, the relationship remains complex and multifaceted. One of the challenges in studying this phenomenon lies in the diversity of social media platforms and users' behaviors within these platforms. Different online activities, such as passive scrolling, active engagement, or comparison with others, may have distinct implications for self-esteem. Thus, a nuanced understanding of the specific contexts and behaviors involved in social media use is essential for elucidating its effects on self-esteem and psychological well-being (Duggan et al., 2015).

In addition to self-esteem, concerns have also been raised about the impact of social media on mental health, particularly regarding anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders, characterized by excessive fear or worry leading to distress or impairment, are among the most prevalent mental health conditions worldwide (Whiteford et al., 2013). The advent of social media has introduced new sources of stress and pressure, including fear of missing out (FOMO), social comparison, and cyberbullying, which may exacerbate anxiety symptoms among vulnerable individuals (Domschke et al.).

Understanding the interplay between social media use, self-esteem, and anxiety is crucial for developing interventions and strategies to promote healthy online behaviors and mitigate potential negative consequences. By addressing the complex psychosocial dynamics underlying social media usage, researchers and practitioners can better support individuals in navigating the digital landscape while safeguarding their mental well-being.

METHODOLOGY

AIM-

- To study the effects of social media addiction on self-esteem and anxiety level among young adults.

OBJECTIVES-

- To assess anxiety levels among young adults with varying degrees of social media addiction.
- To evaluate the correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem in the study population.
- To evaluate the correlation between anxiety levels and self-esteem levels in the study population.

HYPOTHESIS-

- It is hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between the degree of social media addiction and anxiety levels among young adults.
- It is hypothesized that there is a negative correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem in the young adults.
- It is hypothesized that there is a negative correlation between self-esteem levels and anxiety levels in terms of social media.

VARIABLES-

- INDEPENDENT VARIABLE- Social Media Addiction
- DEPENDENT VARIABLE- Self-esteem, Anxiety

SAMPLE SIZE-

- 150 young Adults
- 18-28 years old male and female

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE-

- The study will employ a purposive sample design.

TOOLS USED-

1. Beck's Anxiety Inventory: Developed by Aaron T. Beck and his colleagues, the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) is a self-report questionnaire used to measure the severity of anxiety symptoms in individuals. It consists of 21 items, each describing common symptoms of anxiety such as nervousness, fear, and worry.

Respondents rate the intensity of each symptom they have experienced over the past week on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (severely - I could barely stand it). Higher total scores indicate greater anxiety severity.

2. The Rosenberg Scale of Self-Esteem: One popular self-report tool for evaluating self-esteem is the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES), created by sociologist Morris Rosenberg. It comprises of ten statements that gauge an individual's general sense of acceptance and worth in themselves. On a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, respondents indicate how much they agree with each statement. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. The total scores are determined by adding the ratings for each item.

3. Bergen's Social Media Addiction Scale: A self-report questionnaire called the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) is used to gauge how dependent a person is on social media. It is made up of six measures that measure various facets of social media addiction, including fixation, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. It was developed by academics at the University of Bergen in Norway. Respondents use a Likert scale with 5 being very often and 1 being very rarely to rate how often they have experienced each item. The sum of the scores represents the extent of social media addiction; higher scores correspond to more severe addiction.

Result Analysis and Interpretation

S.No	Variables	Correlation	Interpretation
1	Social Media & Self Esteem	-39.8%	Negative Correlation
2	Social Media & Anxiety	39.5%	Positive Correlation
3	Self Esteem & Anxiety	-34.1%	Negative Correlation

- A negative correlation of -39.8% between self-esteem and social media usage has been found, indicating that self-esteem generally decreases as social media activity increases. This finding highlights the potential impact that social media can have on individual self-perception. Specifically, frequent use of social media platforms may lead to feelings of inadequacy or inferiority. This is often due to the tendency of users to compare themselves against the often idealized and curated representations of others' lives that are portrayed online. Such comparisons can distort personal self-worth, as users might perceive their own lives as less successful or fulfilling in comparison to those they see on their feeds. This can result in a cycle where increased social media usage exacerbates these negative feelings, further diminishing self-esteem.

- A positive correlation of 39.5% between social media usage and anxiety has been found, suggesting that as individuals spend more time on social media, their levels of anxiety tend to rise. This relationship underscores the significant effect that social media can have on mental health. Specifically, regular use of social media platforms can lead to increased anxiety. This often occurs because users constantly compare their real lives to the idealized versions of life that others present online. Such comparisons can create feelings of insecurity and a sense that one's own life is less interesting or rewarding compared to the glamorous images and stories shared by others. This can initiate a harmful cycle where the more time someone spends on social media, the more anxious they feel, further increasing their anxiety over time.
- Research has shown a negative correlation of 34.1% between self-esteem and anxiety, suggesting that as self-esteem increases, levels of anxiety tend to decrease. This relationship highlights the protective impact that self-esteem can have on mental health. People with higher self-esteem generally feel more confident and resilient, which helps them cope better with stress and challenges, thus lowering their chances of feeling anxious. On the other hand, individuals with lower self-esteem may feel less confident in their abilities and worth, making them more susceptible to anxiety. This indicates that building self-esteem could be an effective way to reduce anxiety and enhance overall mental well-being.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, based on a sample of 154 young adults, provide additional insights into the relationship between social media use, anxiety levels, and self-esteem. The results reveal significant correlations between these variables, supporting the hypotheses formulated for the study.

The positive correlation observed between social media addiction and anxiety levels suggests that increased engagement with social media platforms is associated with heightened anxiety among young adults. This aligns with previous research highlighting the role of social media in exacerbating stress and anxiety due to factors such as fear of missing out (FOMO), cyberbullying, and social comparison (Woods & Scott, 2016).

Furthermore, the negative correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem underscores the detrimental impact of excessive social media use on individuals' self-perception. The constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles on social media may contribute to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem, particularly among young adults who are more susceptible to peer influence (Fardouly et al., 2015).

Additionally, the negative correlation between self-esteem levels and anxiety levels in the context of social media highlights the complex interplay between these variables. Individuals with lower self-esteem may be more vulnerable to experiencing heightened anxiety when exposed to social media content that triggers feelings of inadequacy or fear of social rejection (Kross et al., 2013).

These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions aimed at promoting healthy digital habits and fostering positive self-perception among young adults. By raising awareness about the potential negative effects of social media addiction on mental health and providing strategies for managing anxiety and improving self-esteem, interventions can help mitigate the adverse impact of excessive social media use.

In conclusion, this study contributes to a growing body of literature examining the impact of social media on mental health outcomes. By elucidating the relationships between social media use, anxiety levels, and self-esteem among young adults, this research provides valuable insights for the development of effective interventions and policies to promote digital well-being.

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