

The Role of Social Media Addiction on Immediate Gratification and Self-Esteem Among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Social media platforms are used to keep in touch with friends and communities, changing the way of interpersonal communication. However, an irrational and excessive use of it, to the extent that it interferes with other aspects of daily life, can be detrimental. Similarly, immediate gratification refers to instant fulfillment of an individual's needs or desires. Self-esteem, on the other hand, denotes one's subjective sense of overall personal worth or value. The present study investigates social media addiction as a potential determinant of immediate gratification and self-esteem. The participants of this study consist of 120 men and women, within the age range of 18-35 years, studying in different colleges in Mumbai, Maharashtra. They were assessed by using three scales, namely, the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) (Andreassen et al., 2016), Immediate Gratifications Scale (Du et al., 2019) and Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (RSE) (Rosenberg, 1965). Pearson's product-moment correlation and linear regression were used as a statistical analysis tool to assess the relationship between social media addiction, immediate gratification and self-esteem. Results revealed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between social media addiction and immediate gratification ($r = 0.587$) and a statistically negative correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem ($r = -.412$). Linear regression for social media addiction, immediate gratification and self-esteem was found to be significant. The results suggest that individuals who spend an increased amount of time on social media sites are driven by the tendency to find instant satiation of their social needs and low self-esteem in individuals as they tend to compare themselves to others and formulate evaluations about themselves.

Keywords:

Social media addiction, immediate gratification, self-esteem

Introduction

The ubiquity of internet is pervasive. The integration of internet-based technology has become common across various electronic devices. These technological devices have achieved significant market penetration and are virtually pervasive in their influence on society. Notwithstanding their capacity to facilitate global connectivity, these technologies have been subject to divergent interpretations regarding their impact on users and their interpersonal relationships (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017). In the era of technology, social media has become a pervasive element of daily existence.

The utilization of social media platforms allows individuals to establish new relationships and sustain connections with their current social circle, regardless of geographical or temporal limitations (Cheng et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2019). However, excessive usage can negatively impact psychological and social functioning of users, as well as their overall state of well-being. Hussain and Griffiths (2019) conducted a study that emphasizes the possible adverse consequences of social networking site (SNS) use, including the potential to hinder users' psychological functioning and overall well-being. The findings of the study indicate a positive correlation between addiction to social networking sites and the presence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, and anxiety.

The terms social media addiction, problematic social media use, and compulsive social media use are frequently used interchangeably to describe the occurrence of maladaptive social media use, which is distinguished by the presence of addiction-like symptoms and/or diminished self-regulation. This phenomenon has been studied by various researchers (Bányai et al., 2017, Casale et al., 2018, Klobas et al., 2018, Marino et al., 2018, Tarafdar et al., 2020). The term "social media addiction" is frequently used and encompasses various forms such as Facebook addiction, addiction to social networking sites (SNSs) or addictive SNSs use. For this paper, social media addiction is defined as a phenomenon characterized by a maladaptive psychological reliance on SNSs, resulting in the manifestation of symptoms that may be associated with behavioral addiction (Cao et al., 2020; Chen, 2019; Turel & Serenko, 2012).

The study conducted by Sampasa-Kanyinga and Lewis (2015) found that engaging in social networking sites for more than two hours per day was significantly linked to negative self-assessment of mental well-being, as well as heightened instances of psychological distress and suicidal thoughts, even after controlling for other factors, implying that individuals with suboptimal mental well-being may exhibit a higher tendency to utilize social networking sites. Alabi (2013) reported a prevalence rate of 1.6% for Facebook addiction, while Bányai et al. (2017) found that 4.5% of almost 6,000 Hungarian adolescents, who were surveyed as a part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), were at risk of developing social media addiction in this nationally representative study. According to Kuss and Griffiths (2011), the usage of Social Network Sites (SNS) can lead to problematic behavior and psychological issues that can negatively impact work, school, relationships, and face-to-face social interactions. They suggest that individuals who exhibit symptoms and consequences similar to substance-related addictions, such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse, and conflict, may be addicted to using SNSs.

Adolescents, specifically young adults, exhibit a lack of awareness regarding the extent of their social media usage and its potential impact on their academic achievements and social relationships. Research has indicated that a possible association exists between diminished self-regard and feelings of social incompetence, as well as excessive reliance on social networking platforms (Meena et al., 2012). According to a study conducted by Du et al. (2018), individuals who exhibit habitual social media checking, experience a strong sense of social media ubiquity or perceive significant disruptions from social media notifications are more prone to losing control over their social media usage. Furthermore, the immediate gratifications associated with social media were not found to be a significant predictor of failure in exercising self-control on social media. In a study conducted in Sweden, involving 1,011 participants, it was observed that individuals utilize Facebook as a platform to showcase the most favorable aspects of their lives, such as noteworthy events and positive experiences. This, in turn, leads others to perceive their own lives as inferior in comparison, resulting in a negative impact on their self-esteem and overall well-being (Denti et al., 2012). According to Valkenburg et al. (2006), feedback received from online acquaintances can

have a significant impact on an individual's self-esteem and overall well-being. Positive feedback has the potential to boost self-esteem, while negative feedback may have the opposite effect.

Immediate Gratification and Self-esteem

The usage of social media produces a variety of gains, including social gratification and gratification from enjoyable online activities (LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Raacke et al., 2008).

According to Liu et al. (2013), instant gratification is defined as the level of immediate gratification consumers experience when checking SNSs. Positive stimulation is produced for users when a technology instantly satisfies instrumental needs (such as informational or arousal-seeking) or ritualistic needs (such as companionship or passing time), which is followed by a desire to use the technology (Greenfield, 2007; Stafford et al., 2004). It is discovered to be an important and substantial antecedent of the want to purchase an e-commerce website. An empirical study of 205 respondents revealed that immediate gratification and withdrawal are key drivers of the impulse to check social networking sites and that this want significantly affects excessive use (Chan et al., 2015).

People's expectations of immediate gratification from utilizing social media may rise as a result of the satisfaction they experience there (Lin & Lu, 2011). In contrast to benefits from other long-term goals, including study or employment, the predicted gains from acting on a social media temptation are often short-term goals (Hofmann et al., 2016; van Koningsbruggen et al., 2018). This could increase the propensity to put off the work required to achieve long-term goals in favor of short-term, instant gratification goals, which raises the possibility of failing to control the want to use social media, also known as social media control failure.

Therefore, the desire for instant gratification causes issues with self-control. Even when delayed gratification is preferable, individuals with impulsive qualities are more likely to choose for immediate gratification. This finding implies a connection between impulsivity and time perception (Paasche et al., 2019). Researchers who decide to investigate the reasons linked to specific kinds of media employ a

uses and gratifications strategy. According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory, figuring out what motivates people to utilize mass media is one of the keys to understanding why it is so popular (Katz et al., 1973). Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) conducted one of the earliest studies to look at the benefits and usage of SNSs. These authors found that the main reasons for using Facebook and MySpace were to create and maintain social connections after interviewing a sample of university students from the USA.

Social media has revolutionized communication and connectivity in the digital age, but it has also raised concerns regarding addictive behaviors and their impact on individuals' self-esteem. Simultaneously, self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's mental and emotional well-being, as it reflects their subjective evaluation of their worth and value (Andreassen et al., 2012). The relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem is complex and multifaceted. While social media platforms offer opportunities for self-expression, social support, and positive feedback that can enhance self-esteem, they can also contribute to negative social comparisons, leading to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and low self-esteem (Chen & Lee, 2013).

Research has shown that excessive social media use can lead to decreased self-esteem due to various factors such as the constant exposure to carefully curated and filtered content on social media can create unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and happiness, thereby fostering feelings of inadequacy among individuals (Vogel et al., 2014). Moreover, the prominence of social comparison on social media platforms, where users often showcase their highlights and achievements, can intensify feelings of inferiority and decrease self-esteem (Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018). To address this issue, it is essential to understand the dynamics of social media addiction and its influence on self-esteem. By promoting digital literacy, mindfulness in social media use, and fostering supportive online environments, individuals can maintain a healthy balance between their digital lives and their self-esteem.

Hypotheses:

The current study seeks to investigate the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between social media addiction and immediate gratification.

H2: There is a significant negative correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem.

H3: Social media addiction acts as a predictor of immediate gratification.

H4: Social media addiction acts as a predictor of self-esteem.

Method

Participants:

The participants of the study consist of 120 men and women, studying in different colleges (enrolled in postgraduate courses) in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The respondents were within the age range of 18 to 35 years, with a mean age of 24.2 years. Among all the participants 50% of respondents were women and 50% of the respondents were men. Convenience sampling method was used for data collection.

Tools:

1. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS):

In this study, the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) developed by Andreassen et al. (2016) comprises six items based on the six core components (salience, mood, modification, tolerance, withdrawal conflict, and relapse) proposed by Griffiths (2000, 2005) is used to assess social media addiction (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$). It is a 6-item scale used to evaluate the experience of using social media over the past year. The responses on an item ranged on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being 'Very rarely' to 5 being 'Very often'.

2. The Immediate Gratifications Scale:

In this study, the Immediate Gratifications Scale, devised by Du et al. (2019), is designed to assess the extent to which using social media enabled participants

to immediately satisfy several gratifications (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). This scale is a 16-item self-report questionnaire wherein, the responses on an item ranged on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 being 'Disagree Very Much' and 7 being 'Agree Very Much'.

3. The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale:

In this study, the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, devised by Rosenberg (1965), is a 10-item scale designed to assess global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. This scale demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency. Test-retest reliability for 2 weeks reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. The responses on an item ranged on a 4-point Likert scale with 1 being 'Strongly agree' to 4 being 'Strongly disagree'.

Procedure:

The participants were provided with the three questionnaires and a consent form. They had to fill up the details in the consent form and sign to convey their agreement to participate in the survey. Once they had filled and signed the consent form they were asked to fill the tools. The participants were first presented with the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), followed by the Immediate Gratifications Scale, and lastly with the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. After completion of the survey, the filled questionnaires were taken back and checked by the administrator. Participants were thanked and debriefed about the purpose of the study.

Results and Discussion

The present study investigates the relationship between social media addiction, immediate gratification, and self-esteem and identifies whether social media addiction acts as a potential determinant of immediate gratification and self-esteem. The results are indicated below:

Table 1

Correlation between Social Media Addiction, Immediate Gratification and Self-esteem

Sr. No.	Variables	R	Immediate Gratification	Self-esteem
1	Social Media Addiction	-----	.587**	-.412**

Table 2

Regression Coefficients of Social Media Addiction on Immediate Gratification

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	25.49***		5.36
Social media addiction	2.09***	.59	.27
R2	.34		

Note: N=120

*** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 1 of the study stated that 'there is a significant positive correlation between social media addiction and immediate gratification' and hypothesis 3 stated 'social media addiction acts as a predictor of immediate gratification', for testing these hypotheses, correlation and linear regression were conducted.

According to Table 1, there exists a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and immediate gratification. Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Table 2 shows the impact of social media addiction on immediate gratification. The R2 value of .34 revealed that the predictor variable explained a .34% variance in the outcome variable with $F(1, 118) = 61.99, p < .001$. The findings suggested that social media addiction positively predicted immediate gratification ($\beta = .59, p < .001$).

This suggests that social media addiction does predict immediate gratification. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 3

Regression Coefficients of Social Media Addiction on Self-esteem

Variable	B	β	SE
Constant	37.85***		1.73
Social media addiction	-.42***	-.41	.09
R2	.17		

Note: N=120

*** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 2 of the study stated that 'there is a significant negative correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem' and hypothesis 4 stated 'social media addiction acts as a predictor of self-esteem', for testing these hypotheses, correlation and linear regression were conducted.

Regarding Table 1, there exists a significant negative relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem. Thus, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 3 shows the impact of social media addiction on self-esteem. The R2 value of .17 revealed that the predictor variable explained a .17% variance in the outcome variable with $F(1, 118) = 24.08, p < .001$. The findings suggested that social media addiction negatively predicted self-esteem ($\beta = -.41, p < .001$). This suggests that social media addiction does predict self-esteem. Thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Several studies have established an association between social media addiction and immediate gratification. The utilization of social media yields various gratifications, including social gratifications and gratifications derived from engaging in enjoyable online activities (LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Raacke et al., 2008). According to the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications, individuals who engage with media are driven by two distinct categories of gratifications: sought gratifications and obtained gratifications. The concept of gratifications

sought pertains to the anticipated gratifications that users expect to derive from their media usage. On the other hand, gratifications obtained refer to the specific needs that are fulfilled through the consumption of media (Katz et al., 1973; Rubin, 1993). According to Ryan et al. (2014), individuals develop an addiction to these platforms due to the experience of various gratifications that are not attainable in their offline lives. It is anticipated that problematic use will persist as long as individuals continue to receive these desired gratifications on a repetitive basis.

Huang (2012) conducted a study on the utilization of social networking sites (SNS). The results of this study demonstrated that entertainment gratifications emerged as the most influential factor in predicting addiction to SNS. The study conducted by Joinson (2008) examines the various purposes for which individuals utilize the social networking platform Facebook, as well as the satisfaction they obtain from these activities. The application of factor analysis revealed the existence of seven distinct uses and gratifications, namely social connection, shared identities, content consumption, social investigation, social network browsing, and status updating. Additionally, the findings of the research demonstrate that individuals obtain a diverse range of uses and gratifications from social networking platforms. These include traditional content gratification, as well as the development of social capital, communication, monitoring, and engaging in social networking surfing. The various uses and gratifications are associated with distinct patterns of usage, wherein gratifications related to social connection tend to result in higher usage frequency, while gratifications related to content lead to increased time spent on the website.

The study conducted by [redacted] aimed to investigate the various purposes and satisfactions derived from Facebook groups, as well as their association with civic and political engagement. Four distinct needs were identified for utilizing Facebook Groups, namely socialization, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information acquisition. The study revealed that individuals who engage in Facebook groups exhibit a higher propensity to engage in civic endeavors, thereby suggesting that Facebook groups serve as a means of accessing information for offline activities and fostering social connections with acquaintances. Previous studies on the uses and gratifications of Facebook have provided evidence suggesting a correlation between the amount of time individuals spend on Facebook each day

and their motivations for doing so. Specifically, Joinson (2008) found that content gratifications, Foregger (2008) identified passing time as a significant factor, and Hart (2011) highlighted the importance of relationship maintenance about Facebook usage. The utilization of Facebook has been observed to be correlated with the purposes of entertainment (Hart, 2011) and surveillance gratifications (Joinson, 2008). This implies that there exist multiple gratifications linked to both extensive and frequent utilization of Facebook, and it should be noted that not all of these gratifications are centered around social interactions.

Simultaneously, self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's mental and emotional well-being, as it reflects their subjective evaluation of their worth and value (Andreassen et al., 2012). Several researches have been conducted to examine the link between self-esteem and social media addiction. In a study by Mehdizadeh (2010), 100 Facebook users at York University self-reported their levels of narcissism and self-worth. The findings showed that those with low self-esteem are more active online and post more content that promotes themselves on their social networking pages. In other words, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale results showed a negative correlation between several Facebook behaviors.

Research by Vogel et al. (2014) revealed the impact of chronic and temporary exposure to social comparison information on self-evaluations, specifically self-esteem, through social networking sites (SNSs). The findings indicated that individuals with higher chronic exposure to Facebook, measured by frequency of use, tended to have lower trait self-esteem. Additionally, the extent of upward social comparison on Facebook was greater than that of downward social comparison, and upward social comparison significantly mediated the relationship between Facebook use and trait self-esteem. The results further demonstrated that exposure to profiles with positive content, such as those featuring upward-healthy comparison targets and active social networks, was associated with lower state self-esteem and poorer relative self-evaluations.

A study by Hawi & Samaha (2016) aimed to explore the relationships among social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in university students. The findings revealed that university students with high levels of social media addiction reported lower self-esteem than those with low addiction levels. The

results suggested that individuals with lower self-esteem tend to rely more on social media platforms. Additionally, the study highlighted that students who used social media to enhance their self-image were at risk of experiencing lower self-esteem and reduced life satisfaction. Moreover, self-esteem was found to mediate the relationship between social media addiction and life satisfaction emphasizing the significance of considering self-esteem as a crucial factor in understanding the impact of social media addiction on individuals' well-being and overall satisfaction with life.

Conclusion

In this study, the results suggest that individuals who spend an increased amount of time on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram are driven by the tendency to find instant gratification in their social and content needs. Moreover, the results demonstrate that spending an increased amount of time on social media may lead to low self-esteem in individuals as they tend to compare themselves to others and formulate evaluations about themselves.

Implications

The findings of this study may be helpful for individuals to understand the repercussions of staying on social media for longer periods and how instant gratification and self-esteem are associated with social media addiction. It has become extremely easy to obtain whatever one desires in this digital age because every urge for instant gratification experienced by an individual is being fulfilled which can lead to an addiction causing problems in physical and mental health issues. Social media addiction has also shown adverse consequences on one's self-esteem which can affect health and quality of life. The results of this research can be used to increase awareness among parents and other authoritative figures of someone facing social media addiction. Moreover, the results can be used to increase the awareness of the youth and allow them to keep track of the time they spend on social networking sites, become more conscious about the effect it has on them, and regulate or alter the use of the same.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, informed consent has been obtained from all participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation. To safeguard participant privacy, the confidentiality of their responses has been maintained. By utilizing recognized evaluation tools and offering thorough resources and information to enable informed judgments, we limit the potential harm. This research is based on the principle of beneficence which aims to provide valuable societal insights while carefully balancing the advantages above any potential concerns.

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