



Investigating the Impact of Social Media Addiction on Self-Efficacy and Self-Control among Youth in Gujranwala

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate how young people can be interlinked in regards to social media addiction, self-efficacy, and self-control. Social media addiction is an obvious issue, caused by regular interaction with sites such as Instagram, TikTok and Twitter, which triggers compulsions that damage cognitive and emotional processes. This research is founded on Self-Regulation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory with emphasis placed on the way social media addiction influences self-efficacy and self-control as important psychological aspects. A quantitative correlational study was carried out among adolescents and young adults aged 15-24 by use of the Bergen Social Media Addiction scale (BSMAS), the general self-efficacy scale (GSES), and the brief self-control scale (BSCS). According to Research, there is a high negative relationship ($r = -.509^{**}$, $p < .01$) between social media addiction and self-efficacy which means that higher addiction to social media reduces self-efficacy.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Self-Efficacy, Self-Control

Introduction

Social media has radically changed the way people relate, communicate and see their identities. When researching psychological well-being among young people, social media use has taken a significant direction in research. In Aims of this study, the relationship between social media dependency, self-efficacy, and self-control are discussed to penetrate the influence of long-term digital use on individual's sense of self and self-regulation. There has been indelible change in the way people especially younger generations communicate, share opinions, perceive themselves because of social media. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are now intrinsically connected to day to day routines, allowing users to socialize, entertain and prepare themselves for a life online. The wide use of these platforms however has raised speculations that these platforms could result in negative consequences – most especially for the adolescents and the early aged societies. This has resulted in a growing focus for researchers trying to understand how social media engagement affects youth mental health including such outcomes as; self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-control, and has made it an important area for academic study.

Nowadays, social media addiction raises a serious issue, because many users struggle with a very powerful urge to spend significant amounts of time watching these platforms, despite it blocking out their life's other major aspects. The addictive cravings reported in social media usage are correlated with massive disconnections in the regulation of cognition and emotion ecology, which may alter the way individuals evaluate their competencies, address difficulties, and manage their behaviors. The need caused by social media addiction is primarily how it might harm self-efficacy and self-control. Young people are too dependent on self-efficacy and self-control to develop their psychological well-being, which contributes to thriving academically, a stable emotional life, and a better mind. The effective form of self-efficacy and self-control will allow people to flourish both personally and socially especially while they move through the challenge of growing up in adolescence and young adulthood.

The research goal behind this project is the analysis of the relationship between social media addiction, self-efficacy, and self-control among the youth of Gujranwala city, a city with comparable rate of technological growth. The aim of this work is to explain the psychological dynamics of the modern technological environment through the analysis of the relationship between digital platform overuse and change in individuals' self-assessment and control over personal competencies. If more is known about these associations, the study aims to enhance the understanding of social media contributing to the psychological effects of youth.

Background

Social media addiction is described as a significant mental problem by an increasing literature, most prominent among youth, the most frequent social media users. The excessive strategic use of such platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Twitter tend to trigger compulsive behaviors that may cause the effects on a cognitive and emotional level to be negative. This work is concerned with the implications of social media addiction for self-efficacy and self-control, which are their own primary components that are critical in the decision-making process of youth, achievement of personal goals, and well-being maintenance.

Theoretical Framework

The research work here is grounded on the Self-Regulation Theory whereby it states that people regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to achieve the goals of attaining goals. According to Bandura, (1986), social cognitive theory suggests that control of behavior is possible only through self-efficacy. The tremendous dependence of youth on the internet for socializing and daily fun spoils their self-regulation, as a result diminishes self-control and self-efficacy. Based on Dopamine Reward System (Montag et al., 2019), rewards from social media activities that occur after doing it trigger the reward circuitry of the brain, hence fostering addictiveness.

Study Variables

Independent Variable

Social media addiction (Measured using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale – BSMAS)

Dependent Variables

- **Self-Efficacy** (Measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale- GSES)
- **Self-Control** (Measured using the Brief Self-Control Scale – BSCS)

Rationale

While previous studies have explored the impact of social media use on various aspects of mental health, there is limited research specifically examining how social media addiction influences self-efficacy and self-control among youth. Given that self-efficacy and self-control are essential for academic success, career development, and social interactions, it is crucial to investigate how compulsive social media use may undermine these attributes. It is aimed at overcoming this knowledge deficit by exploring the relationship between social media addiction and self-efficacy, self-control, and to utilize these to create specific interventions for mitigation.

Significance

It has been expressed, that young people's dependency on the social media and its possible impacts on their psychological well-being are a source of concern. Numerous studies established regular overuse of social media as degrading of self-efficacy and self-control leading to negative implications in both academic and personal life and overall psychological well-being. With the help of this study on how social media addiction is correlated with these psychological things, the researchers are able to find some significant approaches on how to improve children's digital behavior, as well as their well-being in general.

Literature Review

Social media addiction is the independent variable in the current research. Social media addiction is an unmanageable and abnormal dependency on social media outlets that break through regular habits (Andreassen et al., 2012). Such excessive use is linked to a whole series of psychological and behavioural problems, including lowered self-efficacy and self-control. Since young people are the principle users of social media, research on the effects on their mental health is essential. In this study, social media addiction is the major independent variable whose existence influences self-efficacy and self-control outcomes. In the Dopamine Reward System Model, Montag et al. (2019) argue that frequent exposure to social media activates the brain's reward pathways increasing the risk of developing compulsive behavior, which destroys self-regulation. People usually use social media as something they use to satisfy emotional and social needs (Katz et al., 1973), and yet this habit can undermine their ability to regulate themselves.

Impact on Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the name of the phenomenon when an individual believes in his or her ability to achieve results in specific tasks or contexts (Bandura, 1997).

Growing up virtual accolades vs. personal accomplishments will hollow-out true self-belief in off-line experiences (Błachnio et al., 2016). Passive consumption of content may replace active problem-solving, reducing an individual's belief in their ability to handle challenges (Keles et al., 2020). Fear of missing out (FOMO), amplified by social media, can lead to anxiety and self-doubt, further eroding self-efficacy (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Impact on Self-Control

Self-control refers to an individual's ability to regulate impulses, emotions, and behaviors to achieve long-term goals (Baumeister et al., 1994). Social media addiction can negatively impact self-control by encouraging instant gratification, where individuals prioritize short-term social media engagement over long-term responsibilities (Andreassen et al., 2017). Disrupting attention and focus, making it harder for individuals to concentrate on tasks and resist distractions (Hadar et al., 2017). Creating habitual checking behaviors, reducing impulse control and increasing procrastination tendencies (LaRose et al., 2003).

Methods

Study Aims and Objectives

- To compare the levels of social media addiction among youths
- To examine the relationship between social media addiction, self- efficacy, and self-control.

Research Design

A quantitative, correlational study will be conducted to examine the relationships between social media addiction, self-efficacy, and self-control in youth.

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between social media addiction and self-efficacy among youth?
- How does social media addiction correlate with self-control in youth?

Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no relationship between Social Media Addiction, Self-Control and Self-Efficacy.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** Social Media addiction has a negative relationship with Self-Efficacy.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₂):** Social Media Addiction has a negative relationship with self-control among University Students in Gujranwala

Operational Definitions of Variables

Social Media Addiction

An uncontrollable urge to engage with social media platforms, leading to significant interference in daily life and responsibilities. This condition is marked by excessive time spent on social media, neglect of personal and professional duties, and distress when unable to access these platforms (Andreassen et al., 2012).

Self-Efficacy

An individual's belief in their ability to execute behaviors necessary to achieve specific outcomes. It reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Control

The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to achieve long-term goals (Gillebaart, 2018).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Individuals aged 15 – 24 years (youth population).
- Active users of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter).
- Spend at least 2 hours daily on social media.
- Willing to provide informed consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 15 or above 24 years.
- People who do not use social media regularly.
- Individuals diagnosed with severe psychological disorders affecting self-control or self-efficacy.
- Participants who fail to complete the survey/questionnaire properly.

Sampling Strategy

A convenience sampling approach was used, targeting university students and young professionals aged 15 - 24 who frequently use social media.

Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS. Characteristics of the participants were presented as descriptive statistics analysis. Pearson correlation and regression were used to identify the relationships established between social media addiction, self-efficacy, and self-control in youths.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

Results

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of study variables (N=436)

| Variable | Mean (M) | Standard deviation (SD) |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Social Media Addiction | 1.96 | 1.029 |
| Self-Efficacy | 2.52 | 0.544 |
| Self-Control | 2.26 | 0.443 |

Table 2 Correlation Analysis of BSMAS, GSE and BS (N=436)

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------|---|---------|-------|
| BSMAS | - | -.509** | -.245 |
| GSE | - | - | .190 |
| BS | - | - | - |

The results show that BSMAS has a moderate, significant negative correlation with GSE ($r = -0.509, p < 0.01$), indicating that higher self-control is associated with lower social media addiction. However, BSMAS has a weak, insignificant negative correlation with BS ($r = -0.245, p > 0.05$). Additionally, GSE has a weak, insignificant positive correlation with BS ($r = 0.190, p > 0.05$), suggesting no strong relationship between self-efficacy and behavioral self-control in this sample.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the relationship between social media addiction, self-efficacy, and self-control among youth in Gujranwala, Pakistan. The results of the analysis provide significant insights into how excessive engagement with social media impacts psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and self-control. The significant negative correlation between social media addiction (BSMAS) and self-efficacy (GSE) ($r = -0.509, p < 0.01$) aligns with previous research, suggesting that increased time spent on social media platforms leads to a decrease in youth's belief in their abilities to achieve goals and manage tasks (Błachnio et al., 2016; Keles et al., 2020). Regular feedback in social networks such as Instagram, TikTok and Facebook, triggered on likes, comments and shares, can lead to the development of dependence on the external approval and weaken the confidence of own achievements and assessment of self (Przybylski et al, 2013).

Such a conclusion fits with Self-Regulation Theory, which claims that people need to rely on internal drive and self-efficacy to effectively regulate their objectives as well as emotional equilibrium (Bandura, 1997). Frequent need of validation through social media may erode the self-efficacy that may lead to youths becoming less confident of their abilities in real life setting, as reported by Błachnio et al. (2016). Self-Regulation Theory (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007) shows that having exposure to timely rewards incited by likes, comments, and shares, in individuals an inclination of choosing and prioritizing immediate gratification over long term planning and will power which cripples the individual's ability to effectively regulate their own actions. Clarification of these mechanisms will inform us about how long periods of exposure to social media may undermine self-regulation especially among students struggling with temptations and balancing their academic or personal commitments.

The relationship between social media addiction (BSMAS) and self-control (BS) was weak and nonsignificant ($r = -0.245$, $p > 0.05$) which means that although social media addiction can have the impact on self-control, the links between them are not as strong as they were expected. However, these findings move against the grain of earlier studies which are quite conspicuous in connecting social media addiction with low self-regulation. According to LaRose et al, (2003), people suffering from an addiction to social media are more impulsive and delay tasks. Weak correlation within our research may be due to the fact that self-control is an elastic idea adjusted by personal traits as well as conditions. Because the BSCS instrument used in our study may not be entirely representative of the differing facets of self-control, this weak link may also be explained. Admittedly, Baumeister, et al. (1994) suggest that the self-control is heterogeneous in its nature and dependent on the context of the environment, meaning that measurement tools may profit from a more combined perspective on impulsivity and the attention's focus. Perhaps, the instant gratification from social media may damage self-control momentarily although this may not be a regular sighting in terms of long term behaviour such as avoidance of academic responsibilities or put off working thus reducing the effects of social media addiction on self-control (Andreassen et al., 2017).

The results may suggest that self-control is under complex behavioral patterns that go beyond the limits of the short self-control scale used here. More research may be required to explain self-control through the various behaviours influenced by social media addiction (Baumeister et al, 1994).

Implications and limitations

Findings from research recommend that interventions aimed at reversing social media addiction should focus on enhancing the sense of self-efficacy where young members' are stimulated and they are willing to engage in activities that will enhance both intrinsic motivation and personal success. Motivating children to have tangible objectives toward which to work can reduce the negative impact of social media on their sense of their self. Moreover, mindfulness practices and the cognitive-behavioral techniques could help develop self-control, namely by reducing for purposes of impulse control and postponing those tasks, which are emerging for the process of the frequent internet of social networking use (LaRose et al., 2003). One of the primary limitations of this study is its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial in determining whether social media addiction leads to decreased self-efficacy and self-control over time, or whether these traits predispose individuals to more compulsive social media use. Additionally, future research could explore how different types of social media platforms (e.g., image-based vs. text-based) influence self-efficacy and self-control differently, as the nature of engagement may vary across platforms.

The sample was also restricted to youth from Gujranwala, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could expand the sample to include a broader demographic, taking into account cultural differences and the impact of social media usage patterns in various contexts.

Conclusion

H_0 is rejected because the results show a significant negative correlation between social media addiction and self-efficacy ($r = -0.509$, $p < 0.01$). This confirms that higher social media addiction is associated with lower self-efficacy. H_0 is not rejected because while the correlation between social media addiction and self-control is negative ($r = -0.245$), it is weak and insignificant. This means there is not enough evidence to strongly support a relationship.

Conflict of Interest

We have no conflict of interest to disclose

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