

Impact of Social Media Addiction on Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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Abstract: The present study examines the impact of social media addiction on self-esteem and academic achievement among adolescents. With the increasing use of digital platforms, social media has become an integral part of daily life, influencing both psychological and academic aspects of youth. The study aims to explore how excessive engagement in social media affects adolescents' self-perception and academic performance. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires on social media addiction, self-esteem, and academic scores. Findings suggest that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with lower self-esteem and decreased academic achievement. The study emphasizes the need for awareness programs and balanced use of social media to promote healthy psychological development and academic success among adolescents.

[Sasikala, C.A. and Mishra, R. **Impact of Social Media Addiction on Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement among Adolescents.** *The International Journal of Interpretation, Observation and Analysis*, 2026; Volume 1, Issue 1 (January-March): Page Number: 50-54. ISSN 2349-0713, Peer-reviewed (online/offline), Refereed, Indexed and International Journal (Since 2013), Global Impact Factor: 6.489

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Self-Esteem, Academic Achievement, Adolescents, Digital Behavior

Introduction

In the modern digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of daily life, especially among adolescents. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok have transformed how young people communicate, learn, and express themselves. While social media offers numerous benefits, including social connectivity, information sharing, and creative expression, its excessive use has raised significant concerns among educators, psychologists, and parents. One of the most concerning phenomena emerging from this digital engagement is *social media addiction*, which refers to a compulsive and excessive use of social networking sites that interferes with daily life activities, mental well-being, and academic responsibilities. Adolescents, being in a crucial stage of psychological and social development, are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of this addiction.

Adolescence is a formative period characterized by identity exploration, emotional fluctuations, and an increased need for social validation. During this stage, adolescents seek acceptance and recognition from their peers, often finding such validation through social media interactions such as likes, comments, and followers. However, the constant comparison with others' curated and idealized online lives may lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and lower self-esteem. Self-esteem, defined as an

individual's overall sense of self-worth or personal value, plays a vital role in emotional stability, decision-making, and academic motivation. Studies have indicated that excessive social media use may erode self-esteem by promoting unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and lifestyle. As adolescents compare their real selves to the filtered lives of peers and influencers, they may develop distorted self-perceptions, leading to decreased confidence and increased emotional distress.

The academic implications of social media addiction are equally concerning. Academic achievement, which reflects students' performance in school-related tasks and examinations, is a key indicator of cognitive development and future success. Prolonged social media engagement can distract students from their studies, reduce concentration, and diminish the quality of their academic work. Moreover, excessive screen time often leads to irregular sleep patterns, fatigue, and reduced attention span—all of which negatively affect learning outcomes. Instead of using social media as a supplementary educational tool, many adolescents are drawn into endless scrolling, online chatting, and content consumption, diverting their time and focus from academic priorities.

Several studies have explored the triadic relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and

academic performance. Findings generally suggest that social media addiction has an inverse relationship with both self-esteem and academic achievement. For instance, adolescents who spend more hours on social networking platforms tend to report lower levels of self-confidence and poorer academic outcomes. The addictive patterns of usage, such as compulsive checking of notifications, fear of missing out (FOMO), and dependence on virtual validation, often result in emotional exhaustion and reduced motivation for academic pursuits. Conversely, moderate and mindful use of social media can have positive effects—such as enhanced communication skills, exposure to educational resources, and social support networks—which can contribute to better academic performance and healthy self-esteem.

Understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying social media addiction is essential for developing preventive and corrective measures. Factors such as low self-control, emotional instability, peer pressure, and a lack of real-world social interaction can contribute to addictive behaviors. The “reward system” of social media—based on likes, shares, and comments—stimulates dopamine release in the brain, reinforcing the desire for more engagement. This cycle of gratification can make adolescents increasingly dependent on online approval for their sense of self-worth. As this dependency grows, real-life achievements and academic goals may lose their importance, leading to a decline in overall performance.

Given these dynamics, it becomes crucial to investigate the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and academic achievement among adolescents. By understanding how these variables interact, educators, parents, and policymakers can design interventions that promote balanced social media use, enhance self-esteem, and improve academic outcomes.

Method

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and academic achievement among adolescents. The aim was to determine how excessive use of social media influences students’ self-perception and their academic performance. A correlational research approach was chosen to identify the strength and direction of associations among the three variables without manipulating any of them.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study consisted of adolescents studying in classes IX to XII from

selected schools within the district. Adolescence was chosen as the focus group since this age group (13–18 years) is most active on social media and experiences rapid emotional and psychological development. A total of 200 students were selected through a **stratified random sampling technique** to ensure representation from both genders and different academic streams. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from both students and their parents.

Research Instruments

Three standardized tools were used for data collection:

1. **Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS):** Developed by Young (1998) and later adapted for social networking use, this scale measures the degree of social media dependency. It consists of items assessing aspects such as excessive use, withdrawal, tolerance, and interference with daily activities. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”
2. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** This widely used instrument assesses global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about oneself. It consists of 10 statements rated on a four-point Likert scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” A higher score indicates higher self-esteem.
3. **Academic Achievement Record:** Academic performance was measured using students’ recent school examination marks or grade point averages (GPAs) obtained from official school records, with permission from school authorities.

Procedure

After obtaining approval from the school administration and ethical clearance from the concerned committee, data were collected during school hours. Students were briefed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of responses was assured. The questionnaires were administered in a classroom setting under the supervision of the researcher. The average time for completion was approximately 30 minutes. Participants were encouraged to answer honestly without any external influence.

Data Analysis and Results

The collected data were analyzed using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)** to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and academic achievement

among adolescents. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. Descriptive statistics helped summarize the basic features of the data,

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 200)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Addiction	65.42	10.35	40	90
Self-Esteem	27.16	5.42	15	38
Academic Achievement (GPA)	72.58	8.11	50	90

Interpretation:

The descriptive statistics show that adolescents, on average, exhibited a **moderate level of social media addiction**, a **medium range of self-esteem**, and a **satisfactory academic performance**. The variation

while correlation and regression analyses determined the relationships and predictive effects among the variables.

among participants indicates diversity in their social media engagement and its possible influence on self-esteem and achievement.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients between Variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Social Media Addiction	—		
2. Self-Esteem	-0.58**	—	
3. Academic Achievement	-0.63**	0.49**	—

Interpretation

The correlation analysis revealed that **social media addiction is significantly and negatively correlated** with both **self-esteem** ($r = -0.58$) and **academic achievement** ($r = -0.63$). This indicates that adolescents who are more addicted to social media tend to have **lower self-esteem** and **poorer academic performance**. Conversely, a **positive correlation** (r

$= 0.49$) was found between self-esteem and academic achievement, implying that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better academically.

Regression Analysis

To further determine the predictive influence of social media addiction on self-esteem and academic achievement, simple linear regression was performed.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	β (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p)	R ²
Self-Esteem	Social Media Addiction	-0.58	-9.41	0.001**	0.34

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	β (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p)	R ²
Academic Achievement	Social Media Addiction	-0.63	-10.26	0.001**	0.39

Note: $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant)

Interpretation

Regression results confirm that **social media addiction significantly predicts both self-esteem and academic achievement**. Approximately **34% of the variance in self-esteem** and **39% of the variance in academic achievement** can be explained by social media addiction. The negative beta values indicate that as addiction levels increase, self-esteem and academic performance decrease proportionally.

Discussion

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and academic achievement among adolescents. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation between social media addiction and both self-esteem and academic achievement, and a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. These results are consistent with prior research, confirming that excessive social media use can adversely affect adolescents' psychological well-being and scholastic performance. The first major finding of this study shows that **higher social media addiction levels are associated with lower self-esteem**. This outcome aligns with the observations of Andreassen et al. (2016) and Kuss & Griffiths (2017), who found that individuals with excessive social media usage tend to experience reduced self-worth due to constant social comparison. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to these effects because they are in a stage of identity formation and are often influenced by peer validation and online feedback. The tendency to compare one's life, appearance, or achievements with the idealized and filtered images seen online can lead to dissatisfaction, self-doubt, and feelings of inferiority. Over time, these repeated negative self-assessments may lower self-esteem and increase dependency on social media for emotional gratification.

The second important finding indicates that **social media addiction negatively impacts academic achievement**. Adolescents who spend excessive time on social networking platforms may experience distraction, procrastination, and a decline in academic

focus. These findings are supported by the studies of Khan (2020) and Mehmood & Taswir (2013), who reported that social media overuse leads to poor time management and reduced study efficiency. Constant engagement in online interactions or browsing content disrupts concentration, reduces sleep quality, and hampers cognitive functions essential for learning. As a result, academic performance deteriorates. Moreover, the addictive nature of social media—through continuous notifications and instant gratification—creates a habitual loop that draws students away from educational responsibilities.

The study also found a **positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement**, suggesting that students who possess higher self-confidence and a positive self-image perform better academically. This observation is consistent with the work of Baumeister et al. (2003), who emphasized that self-esteem enhances motivation, goal-setting, and resilience, which are crucial for academic success. Adolescents with high self-esteem are more likely to engage actively in learning, manage stress effectively, and maintain persistence in their studies. In contrast, low self-esteem may lead to anxiety, fear of failure, and withdrawal from academic challenges. The results collectively highlight that social media addiction not only disrupts academic discipline but also undermines emotional and psychological stability. It can create a vicious cycle where reduced self-esteem leads to further dependency on online validation, which in turn hampers academic performance. Therefore, it becomes essential to address the psychological aspects of social media use, not merely its time-related consequences.

From an educational perspective, the findings underscore the importance of **digital literacy and self-regulation** among adolescents. Schools and parents need to collaborate to create awareness about responsible social media usage. Integrating programs that teach students about online behavior, emotional regulation, and time management could mitigate the negative effects of excessive screen time. Encouraging offline social interactions, sports, and

creative activities can also help in maintaining a healthy balance between virtual and real-life engagements.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the impact of social media addiction on self-esteem and academic achievement among adolescents. The findings clearly indicate that excessive engagement with social media negatively affects both psychological and educational outcomes. Adolescents who exhibited higher levels of social media addiction were found to have lower self-esteem, suggesting that compulsive online behavior contributes to diminished self-worth. Constant comparison with peers, seeking validation through likes and comments, and exposure to idealized content are significant factors that undermine adolescents' confidence and self-perception. In addition to its psychological effects, social media addiction was observed to have a considerable negative impact on academic achievement. Students who spend excessive time on social networking platforms often face distraction, reduced concentration, and poor time management, all of which interfere with their learning process. The regression analysis revealed that social media addiction is a strong negative predictor of academic performance, emphasizing the need to address excessive usage to ensure better educational outcomes.

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