

Impact of Social Media on Individuals' Self-Esteem

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Abstract

Social media platforms have transformed global communication and interaction, profoundly impacting how individuals perceive themselves and engage with others. In recent years, self-esteem has become a critical component of psychological well-being, influencing various aspects of individuals' lives, including their mental health, interpersonal relationships, and professional success. This review paper aims to provide an overview of the main findings from recent studies on the impact of social media on adolescents and young adults. The findings from this review will be valuable for understanding how social media influences the psychological effects of individuals. Identify gaps in the current literature and propose directions for future research to advance understanding in this field.

Keywords: Social media, Self-esteem, Adolescents, Young adults, Well-being, Interpersonal relationships, Professional success.

INTRODUCTION

The global user base of social media platforms stands at 4.48 billion (Dean, 2023), with an average daily usage duration of two hours and twenty-four minutes. With over 1.3 billion users in 2014, it was the most widely used social media network globally (Fardouly, et al., 2015). These platforms fulfil social and recreational demands. However, it has been shown that using social media might interfere with everyday objectives (Derks, et al., 2021).

The study examines how using social media affects one's sense of self-worth to identify trends or habits in the individual. The significance of this study is underscored by the increasing role that social media plays in everyday life, especially for young adults and adolescents. These platforms have a significant effect on society's norms and views, especially those related to self-esteem, as they grow more and more interwoven into daily routines. This widespread impact necessitates a thorough investigation into how social media usage correlates with problematic engagements involving self-esteem (Vartanian, et al., 2021), self-control (Vries, et al., 2020), and overall well-being (Kross, et al., 2020). The study aims to shed light on the nuanced relationship between social media use habits and people's psychological effects by providing answers to these questions. The compelling and often unrealistic representations of beauty standards on these platforms tend to target younger users, thus it is important to comprehend these dynamics to design tailored treatments and support mechanisms. An essential element of psychological well-being, self-esteem affects a person's ability to succeed in their career, maintain good relationships with others, and maintain mental health. Social media's emergence has brought about new dynamics in

how people create their self-identity, get feedback, and compare themselves to others (Valkenburg, et al., 2017).

This review paper aims to provide an overview of the main findings from recent studies on the impact of social media on self-esteem. Highlight common patterns and emerging trends in the research, including the role of specific social media features (e.g., likes, comments) and user behaviours (e.g., passive vs. active use). Determine the gaps in the available research and suggest future lines of inquiry to deepen our grasp of the subject (Valkenburg. et al., 2013).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-esteem is defined as one's assessment of oneself and is manifested in the conviction that one is capable, prosperous, and valued (Kamila, et al., 2014). Self-esteem has a significant impact on people's feelings, actions, and social interactions. Adolescents and young adults experience tremendous growth and volatility in their self-esteem as they negotiate peer interactions, identity creation, and cultural expectations. To properly address its effects and encourage good mental health outcomes in this susceptible group, it is imperative to comprehend how elements like social media use affect self-esteem. Social media platforms have transformed communication and connection on a worldwide scale, having a significant impact on how people interact with each other and view themselves. These platforms are essential for the development of identity, socialisation, and self-expression for teenagers and young adults. Comprehending their impact on self-esteem is vital in evaluating the psychological ramifications and directing programmes designed to foster better digital habits and mental health.

The study "Social Media's Impact on Adolescents' Self-Esteem" The study's findings shows a significant inverse association between teens' self-esteem and the amount of time they spend on social media each day, with higher social media usage being associated with lower self-esteem scores. Furthermore, individuals who mostly interacted with text-based social media content were shown to have somewhat higher self-esteem scores than those who primarily interacted with photos and videos (Faroq, et al., 2023).

According to the study of Adolescents and Young Adults' Use of Social Media and following of E-cigarette Influencers, using various platforms like TikTok and Pinterest for teenagers and Twitter for young adults was found to be linked to exposure towards e-cigarette influencers. These results can help shape tobacco regulations and social media policies that prohibit e-cigarette influencers from using popular platforms among the adolescent population.

Numerous research looking at the relationship between social media use and wellbeing have discovered that using social media can have an impact on mental health issues such as eating disorders, anxiety, despair, and negative body image. Excessive self-control can lead to eating problems, anxiety, sadness, body shame, and self-criticism. Body dissatisfaction resulting from the discrepancy between an individual's real body and their idealised version is a well-researched topic in body image disorder studies. Studies indicate that the ideal body standards promoted by social media can lead to unhealthy eating habits and body dissatisfaction (Vries, et al., 2016).

Furthermore, body image and self-esteem are empowered and supported by social media. By embracing various body types, these platforms have contributed to the promotion of body positivity. Through campaigns and shared tales, the collaborative spirit of social media groups challenges beauty stereotypes while generating a sense of validation and belonging (Aberg & Bue, et al., 2020).

Several studies have suggested that there is a nuanced relationship between self-esteem and social media use. The influence of using social networking sites on teenagers' self-esteem is dependent on the type of online interactions, according to a meta-analysis done by Valkenburg in 2017. On social media, positive comments can boost self-esteem while bad comments or societal comparisons might have the opposite impact (Valkenburg, 2017).

Numerous studies have been conducted on the issue of social comparison on social media platforms. Vogel emphasised that when people think others are doing better than they are, they frequently compare themselves to others in an upward social comparison, which can lower one's self-esteem. This impact is most noticeable on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, where people routinely post idealised images of their lives (Vogel, et al., 2014).

Addiction to social media has come to light as a major issue affecting self-esteem. According to Andreassen's 2017 research, compulsive usage of social media is linked to decreased self-esteem when people use it excessively. Feelings of reliance and inadequacy might worsen when there is a persistent need for validation and approval from others (Andreassen, 2017).

There have also been noted gender disparities in the ways that social media affects self-esteem. According to a 2015 study by Fardouly, compared to their male peers, female teenagers are more likely to suffer from detrimental effects on their self-esteem as a result of using social media. This disparity is explained by the fact that women place more value on social validation and physical beauty (Fardouly, 2015).

Social media self-presentation techniques can mitigate the effect on self-esteem. According to research by Gonzales and Hancock from 2001, those who express themselves authentically online report feeling better about themselves, while those who strategically portray themselves online to project an idealised image are more likely to struggle with self-esteem problems. A sincere sense of connection and self-acceptance are fostered by presenting oneself authentically (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011).

The interaction between social media and self-esteem, and cultural context is vital. Chen and Lee's (2013) study discovered that the degree to which people feel socially connected and supported serves as a mediating factor in the effect of social media on self-esteem in collectivist cultures. The emphasis on looks and personal accomplishment, on the other hand, is more prominent in individualist societies, which results in distinct dynamics in the way social media impacts self-esteem (Chen & Lee, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Social media has a complex effect on people's self-esteem, influencing both positive and negative impacts depending on several aspects. Good relationships and encouraging comments can boost self-esteem by giving users a feeling of acceptance and approval. However, the social comparison culture pervasive on Facebook and Instagram frequently has unfavourable effects. People often look at idealised images of other people's lives and compare themselves to them in an upward social comparison, damaging one's self-esteem and creating feelings of inadequacy.

This relation is shaped in large part by social comparison, cyberbullying, platform-specific features, the type of online interactions, addiction, gender, self-presentation, cultural context, and individual characteristics. Comprehending these processes is crucial to devising interventions that foster positive self-esteem and responsible usage of social media among this susceptible demographic.

Social media provides threats to one's self-esteem alongside opportunities for positive self-affirmation, especially in the context of social comparison, addiction, and cultural pressures. In an increasingly digital

society, future research should concentrate on methods to attenuate the negative consequences of social media use and encourage healthy use, improving overall well-being and self-esteem.

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