

## EXAMINATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND SELF-ESTEEM: IMPACT ON LIFE SATISFACTION

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### ABSTRACT

Social media has become an essential part of daily life for university students, but excessive use may influence their psychological well-being. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university students and to determine whether social media addiction and self-esteem predict life satisfaction. A quantitative cross-sectional design was used, and data were collected from 70 undergraduate students using standardized measures including the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and two-way ANOVA through SPSS. The results indicated that self-esteem was positively associated with life satisfaction, while social media addiction showed a significant negative relationship with life satisfaction. Regression analysis further revealed that self-esteem positively predicted life satisfaction, whereas social media addiction negatively predicted it. However, the interaction effect between self-esteem and social media addiction on life satisfaction was not significant. These findings suggest that students with stronger self-esteem tend to feel more satisfied with their lives, whereas excessive engagement with social media may reduce overall well-being. The study highlights the importance of promoting healthy social media use and positive self-perception among university students in order to improve their overall life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** social media addiction, self-esteem, life satisfaction, university students, psychological well-being

### Introduction

In the modern digital age, social media has become a central part of everyday life, especially among university students and young adults. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and TikTok allow people to communicate, share experiences, and stay connected with others instantly. While these platforms provide many benefits such as easier communication and access

to information, excessive use has raised concerns among researchers about its possible psychological effects. Recent studies suggest that heavy engagement with social media may influence individuals' emotional well-being, self-perception, and overall satisfaction with life (Keles et al., 2020; Sun & Zhang, 2021).

### **Social Media Addiction**

One important concept related to excessive online engagement is social media addiction. Social media addiction refers to a pattern of compulsive and uncontrollable use of social networking platforms that interferes with daily life, academic performance, and psychological well-being. Individuals experiencing social media addiction often spend a significant amount of time online, feel a strong urge to check social media frequently, and may experience discomfort or anxiety when they are unable to access these platforms. Recent research has shown that problematic social media use is associated with various negative outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and lower psychological well-being among young adults (Cheng et al., 2021; Kircaburun et al., 2022).

### **Self-Esteem**

Another important psychological factor connected with social media use is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their own worth and value. It reflects how positively or negatively people feel about themselves and their abilities. Social media environments often encourage individuals to compare themselves with others through photos, achievements, and lifestyle posts shared online. These comparisons may sometimes lead to feelings of inadequacy or lower self-worth. Recent studies indicate that frequent exposure to idealized images and lifestyles on social media can negatively influence individuals' self-esteem, particularly among young adults who are highly active on these platforms (Appel et al., 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2022).

### **Life Satisfaction**

A closely related concept in psychological well-being is life satisfaction. Life satisfaction refers to a person's overall cognitive evaluation of their life according to their own standards and expectations. It represents an important component of subjective well-being and reflects how satisfied individuals feel about different areas of their life such as relationships, achievements, and personal growth. Individuals with higher self-esteem generally report greater life satisfaction because they tend to evaluate their lives more

positively. In contrast, negative psychological experiences, including problematic technology use, may decrease individuals' overall satisfaction with life (Diener et al., 2022; Orben, 2020).

### **Previous Researches**

Recent research has begun to explore how social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction are interconnected. Excessive social media use may expose individuals to constant social comparison, validation seeking, and fear of missing out (FoMO), which can negatively affect their self-esteem and emotional well-being. As a result, individuals who develop addictive patterns of social media use may experience lower levels of life satisfaction. Several studies have reported that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with lower psychological well-being and reduced life satisfaction among university students (Błachnio et al., 2022; Hawi et al., 2021).

### **Purpose**

Although previous research has explored the effects of social media on psychological well-being, some gaps still remain. Many studies have focused on either social media addiction or self-esteem separately when examining their impact on well-being. However, fewer studies have examined how both social media addiction and self-esteem together predict life satisfaction among university students. In addition, research focusing on university populations is still developing, particularly in academic settings where students are highly exposed to digital environments. Understanding how these psychological variables interact is important because university students represent one of the most active groups of social media users.

### **Aim**

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university students. Specifically, the study investigates whether social media addiction and self-esteem significantly predict life satisfaction. By exploring these relationships, this research contributes to the growing literature on digital behavior and

psychological well-being and provides a better understanding of how social media use influences students' overall life satisfaction.

### Literature Review

The increasing use of social media among young adults has attracted significant attention from researchers who aim to understand its psychological effects. In recent years, many studies have examined how excessive social media use influences individuals' self-perception and overall well-being. One of the key areas of interest is the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, particularly among university students.

Recent research by Keles et al. (2020) examined the psychological impact of social media use among young people and found that excessive engagement with social networking platforms is associated with increased psychological distress and reduced well-being. The authors suggested that frequent exposure to online content may create pressure to maintain a certain image, which can negatively influence individuals' perceptions of themselves. These findings highlight the potential risks associated with excessive social media use. Similar concerns are addressed in the present study, which also focuses on how problematic social media use may influence individuals' psychological outcomes, particularly their satisfaction with life.

Similarly, Appel et al. (2020) explored the role of social comparison on social media and found that individuals who frequently compare themselves with others online tend to report lower levels of self-esteem. According to the authors, social media platforms often present idealized images of people's lives, which can make users feel less satisfied with their own achievements and appearance. This process of comparison can gradually influence how individuals evaluate themselves. These findings support the theoretical basis of the present study, which considers self-esteem as an important psychological factor that may influence life satisfaction among university students.

Further research has also explored the relationship between social media addiction and well-being

among university populations. Cheng et al. (2021) conducted a large-scale meta-analysis examining social media addiction across different countries and found that problematic social media use is increasingly common among young adults. The study reported that individuals with higher levels of social media addiction often experience negative psychological outcomes such as stress, anxiety, and reduced life satisfaction. These findings provide evidence that excessive social media engagement may influence overall well-being. In line with these findings, the current study also investigates whether social media addiction negatively predicts life satisfaction among university students.

Another study by Hawi et al. (2021) examined the relationship between digital addiction, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. Their findings indicated that individuals who reported higher levels of addictive social media use also tended to report lower self-esteem and reduced well-being. The authors emphasized that constant online engagement may create unrealistic expectations and increase individuals' reliance on external validation. These findings are relevant to the current study, which also considers self-esteem as an important variable that may influence how social media use affects life satisfaction.

In addition to these findings, Błachnio et al. (2022) investigated the association between Facebook addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among young adults. Their results showed that social media addiction was negatively related to life satisfaction, while self-esteem was positively associated with life satisfaction. The study suggested that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to evaluate their lives more positively despite the influence of social media. These findings provide important support for the present research, which also examines self-esteem as a predictor of life satisfaction alongside social media addiction.

More recently, Valkenburg et al. (2022) examined the broader impact of social media use on mental health and self-perception. The authors reported that the effects of social media are complex and may vary depending on how individuals engage with these platforms. While moderate use may

provide social support, excessive or problematic use may negatively influence self-esteem and psychological well-being. This perspective highlights the importance of examining multiple psychological variables together when studying the impact of social media use, which is also the focus of the present study.

Although existing research provides valuable insights into the psychological effects of social media use, several gaps remain. Many previous studies have focused primarily on the direct relationship between social media addiction and psychological outcomes such as depression or anxiety. However, fewer studies have examined how social media addiction and self-esteem simultaneously predict life satisfaction, particularly among university students. Additionally, the interaction between these variables within academic settings remains relatively underexplored.

Therefore, the present study aims to extend previous research by examining the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university students. By investigating these variables together, the study seeks to provide a better understanding of how social media behavior and psychological self-evaluation influence students' overall satisfaction with life.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The present study used a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university students. The study also aimed to determine whether social media addiction and self-esteem significantly predict life satisfaction.

### Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 70 university students enrolled in undergraduate programs. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The participants were currently studying at a university and represented young adults who are active users of social media platforms. University students were selected for

this study because they are among the most frequent users of social networking sites and are therefore more likely to experience the psychological effects associated with excessive social media use.

### Measures

#### *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)*

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1965). The scale consists of 10 items designed to assess an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth. Participants responded to each statement using a Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. In the present study, the scale demonstrated acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .752.

#### *Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)*

Social media addiction was measured using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) developed by Andreassen et al. (2016). The scale measures addictive patterns of social media use based on core addiction components such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Participants rated their responses on a Likert-type scale reflecting their level of agreement with each item. Higher scores indicate greater levels of social media addiction. In the current study, the scale showed a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .515$ .

#### *Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)*

Life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener et al. (1985). The scale consists of five items that assess individuals' overall evaluation of their life satisfaction. Participants responded to the items using a Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction with life. In the present study, the reliability of the scale was  $\alpha = .685$ .

### Procedure

Data for the present study were collected from university students after obtaining their informed consent. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their

responses would remain confidential and would be used only for academic purposes. The questionnaires were administered in a structured format, and participants were asked to respond honestly to each item. The data collection process was conducted in a voluntary manner, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

### Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation,

skewness, kurtosis, and reliability coefficients were calculated for all study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether self-esteem and social media addiction significantly predict life satisfaction. In addition, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the main and interaction effects of self-esteem and social media addiction on life satisfaction.

## Results

### Quantitative Analysis

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics and reliabilities of sample for study variables (N=70)*

Scales	N	Mean	Mod	S. D	$\alpha$	Min	Max	Skew	Kur
RSES	70	17.41	15	4.808	.752	8	29	0.313	-0.448
BSMAS	70	17.39	17 <sup>a</sup>	3.883	.515	10	30	0.583	1.088
SWLS	70	22.07	20	5.739	.685	5	34	-0.281	0.383

*Note.* a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

### Qualitative Analysis

The presents the descriptive statistics and reliability values for self-esteem, social media addiction, and life satisfaction. The results show that participants reported moderate levels of self-esteem, social media addiction, and life satisfaction. The reliability values for the scales were acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha values of .752 for self-esteem, .515 for social media addiction, and .685 for life satisfaction. Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis values indicate that the data were approximately normally distributed.

### Quantitative Analysis

Table 2

*Correlation Analysis among Self-Esteem, Social Media Addiction and Life Satisfaction (N=70)*

Variables	1	2	3
Self-Esteem	-		
Social Media Addiction	-.165	-	
Life Satisfaction	.482**	-.352**	-

*Note.* \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The table shows correlation analysis among self-esteem, social media addiction and life satisfaction. The results show that Self-esteem is positively correlated with life satisfaction ( $r = .482^{**}$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and social media addiction is negatively correlated with life satisfaction ( $r = -.352^{**}$ ,  $p = .003$ ). However, self-esteem is not significantly correlated with social media addiction ( $r = -.165$ ,  $p = .171$ ).

### Qualitative Analysis

The shows the correlation among the study variables. The results indicate that self-esteem has a significant positive relationship with life satisfaction ( $r = .482$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to experience greater life satisfaction. In contrast, social media addiction is significantly negatively related to life satisfaction ( $r = -.352$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that higher levels of social media

addiction are associated with lower life satisfaction. However, the relationship between self-esteem and social media addiction was not significant.

### Quantitative Interpretation

Table 3

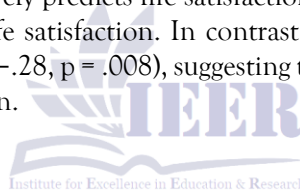
*Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Life Satisfaction (N=70)*

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Constant	20.21	3.72	-	5.44	<.001	12.79	27.63
Self-Esteem	0.52	0.12	0.44	4.23	<.001	0.27	0.77
Social Media Addiction	-0.41	0.15	-0.28	-2.71	.008	-0.72	-0.11

Note. Dependent variable= Life Satisfaction  
 B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE B = standard error of B;  $\beta$  = standardized regression coefficient; CI = confidence interval. The results of the multiple regression indicate that self-esteem significantly positively predicts the outcome variable (B = 0.52,  $\beta$  = 0.44,  $p < .001$ ), while social media addiction significantly negatively predicts it (B = -0.41,  $\beta$  = -0.28,  $p = .008$ ). This suggests that higher self-esteem is associated with higher levels of the outcome, whereas higher social media addiction is associated with lower levels.

### Qualitative Interpretation

This presents the results of the multiple regression analysis predicting life satisfaction. The findings indicate that self-esteem significantly and positively predicts life satisfaction ( $\beta = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), meaning that higher self-esteem is associated with greater life satisfaction. In contrast, social media addiction significantly and negatively predicts life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p = .008$ ), suggesting that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with lower life satisfaction.



### Quantitative Interpretation

Table 4

*Two-way ANOVA for Self-Esteem, Social Media Addiction and Life Satisfaction*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
SE	0.755	1	0.755	2.946	.091	.046
SMA	1.647	3	0.549	2.143	.104	.095
SE×SMA	0.991	2	0.496	1.934	.153	.060
Error	15.634	61	0.256			
Corrected Total	20.515	67				

Note. N = 68. Dependent variable: LS Interpretation. Levene's test was non-significant,  $F(5, 61) = 1.00$ ,  $p = .424$ , indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.  $\eta^2$  represents partial eta squared.

A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of self-esteem,  $F(1, 61) = 2.95$ ,  $p = .091$ , or social media addiction,  $F(3, 61) = 2.14$ ,  $p = .104$ , on LS interpretation. The interaction effect was also non-significant,  $F(2, 61) = 1.93$ ,  $p = .153$ .

### Qualitative Interpretation

This table presents the results of the two-way ANOVA examining the effects of self-esteem and social media addiction on life satisfaction. The results show that neither the main effects of self-

esteem and social media addiction nor their interaction effect were statistically significant. However, the non-significant Levene's test indicates that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university students, and to determine whether social media addiction and self-esteem significantly predict life satisfaction. Overall, the findings of the study largely support the research purpose and provide useful insights into how psychological factors and digital behavior influence students' well-being.

The correlation analysis revealed that self-esteem was positively associated with life satisfaction, indicating that students who perceive themselves positively and have higher self-worth tend to experience greater satisfaction with their lives. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem generally evaluate their lives more positively and feel more confident in managing personal and social challenges. For university students, self-esteem plays an important role because this stage of life involves identity development, academic pressure, and social adjustment. Students who feel confident about their abilities and personal value are therefore more likely to maintain a positive outlook toward their lives.

The findings of this study are consistent with earlier research conducted by Błachnio et al. (2022) and Hawi et al. (2021), which reported that self-esteem is strongly related to psychological well-being and life satisfaction. These studies suggested that individuals with stronger self-esteem are better able to cope with the pressures created by social comparison and online validation. The present study supports this perspective by demonstrating that self-esteem remains an important psychological factor that contributes to overall life satisfaction among university students. Another important finding of the study was the negative relationship between social media addiction and life satisfaction. The results indicate that students who show higher levels of social media addiction tend to report lower satisfaction with their lives. This may occur because excessive social media use can lead to unhealthy comparison with others, reduced face-to-face social interactions, and increased exposure to unrealistic representations of success and lifestyle. As a result,

individuals may begin to feel dissatisfied with their own lives.

This finding supports the results of previous research, including studies by Cheng et al. (2021) and Keles et al. (2020), which found that problematic social media use is associated with lower psychological well-being and reduced life satisfaction. These studies suggested that excessive time spent on social networking platforms may disrupt daily routines, increase emotional stress, and reduce individuals' engagement with meaningful offline activities. The present study further confirms that such patterns of social media use may negatively affect how students evaluate their overall life satisfaction.

Interestingly, the study found that self-esteem was not significantly correlated with social media addiction. This suggests that in this sample, levels of self-esteem were not directly related to the degree of addictive social media use. One possible explanation is that university students may use social media for various purposes such as academic communication, entertainment, and social interaction, which may not necessarily be influenced by their level of self-esteem. This finding differs slightly from some previous studies that reported a negative association between self-esteem and social media addiction. The difference may be due to variations in cultural context, patterns of social media use, or sample characteristics.

The regression analysis provided further support for the study's main objective by showing that self-esteem and social media addiction significantly predict life satisfaction. Self-esteem positively predicted life satisfaction, while social media addiction negatively predicted it. These findings indicate that both variables play an important role in shaping individuals' overall evaluation of their lives. In other words, students who feel confident about themselves tend to experience higher satisfaction with life, whereas those who engage excessively with social media may experience lower levels of life satisfaction.

However, the two-way ANOVA results did not show significant main or interaction effects of self-esteem and social media addiction on life satisfaction when the variables were categorized

into groups. This suggests that while these variables are related to life satisfaction at the continuous level, their grouped differences were not strong enough to produce statistically significant effects. This outcome highlights the complexity of psychological relationships and suggests that life satisfaction may be influenced by multiple interacting factors beyond social media use and self-esteem alone.

Overall, the findings of the present study support the research purpose by demonstrating that self-esteem and social media addiction are important factors associated with life satisfaction among university students. The results emphasize that while social media has become a central part of students' daily lives, excessive or addictive use may negatively influence their psychological well-being. At the same time, maintaining healthy self-esteem appears to play a protective role in promoting greater life satisfaction.

These findings are particularly important in the context of modern digital lifestyles, where young adults spend a significant portion of their time online. Understanding the psychological impact of social media use can help educators, psychologists, and students themselves develop strategies to promote healthier digital habits and improve overall well-being. By highlighting the combined influence of self-esteem and social media addiction, the present study contributes to the growing literature on digital behavior and psychological health among university students.

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