

# **From Connection to Isolation: How Social Media Addiction Affects Self - Esteem, work and Social Interaction Skills**

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## **Abstract**

The study analysed how social media addiction impacts self – esteem, work and Social Interaction Skills. A quantitative methodology was used. A set of questionnaires was used to a sample of 124 students studying at Lovely Professional University , India. With an emphasis on social interactions, anxiety, and self-esteem, this research investigates how social media addiction affects mental health and social skills. It seeks to investigate how using social media can result in loneliness as opposed to community. With the hypothesis that more social media addiction is associated with poorer self-esteem and poor Work Performance, the study will examine the correlation between social media addiction and self-esteem, Work, and social interaction abilities.

**Keywords:** Social Media Addiction, Work, Self Esteem, Social Interaction Skills, Students

## **Introduction**

In today's era, social media is so prominent that it has become impossible to survive without it. It has become an essential part of everyone's life. It is used as an effective tool to stay in touch with our friends, share our thoughts and to explore what is happening around us. They allow individual to curate their online identities and control the information one consumes, significantly influencing our social experiences and self - perception.

Though, social media is useful, it acts as a double- edged sword, offering both BAN and BOON to society. On one hand it fosters social relationships, by connecting with our loved ones and helps one in learning and entertainment. On the other hand, excessive use can lead to addiction mental health issues and the spread of misinformation. Striking a balance is very important to harness its benefits and to mitigate its drawbacks.

The heavy usage of social media can lead to addiction which is characterised by an obsessive need to stay online that can disrupt daily life activities. The social media addict starts to neglect essential needs like sleep, personal relationships that can eventually lead to emotional and behavioral issues. Such individuals remain irritated most of the time and not devoting much time to their close relations leads to misunderstandings that can cause interpersonal conflicts. Furthermore, social media addiction can deteriorate the individual's self -esteem, mental health and social interaction skills. Social media is designed in a manner to make users addictive. Since, it constantly rewards users with engaging contents along with features of likes, comments and umpteen notifications which keeps popping up on the screen, which make them feel good. It happens due to certain hormonal secretions of the brain that secrete pleasure

hormones. This creates a vicious cycle where the users keep going back for more such interesting contents. One reason behind this is social media platforms use certain strategies to keep their users hooked such as infinite scrolling for hours, personalized notifications. As a result, social media users, spend too much time, neglecting real life interactions and even deteriorating their mental health.

One major way social media addiction affects mental health is by negatively impacting self-esteem. Self-esteem is basically how much a person values themselves. Nowadays, people often present perfect versions of their lives, making social comparison a major issue among young adults. People often compare themselves to others, judging their own worth based on what their peers, celebrities, and influencers share. Such comparisons often lead to a feeling of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). These comparisons, especially when they make others seem better, can lead to feelings of not being good enough, self-doubt, and unhappiness among the youths.

### **1. Social Media Addiction and Self-Esteem**

Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook make us compare ourselves to others by showing us only the best parts of people's lives. People often post pictures of their vacations, achievements, parties, and stylish clothes, hiding their rough times they have been through. This makes young adults think that everyone else's life is perfect, which is not true. For people who already feel insecure, seeing these perfect lives can make them feel even worse about themselves. This can lead to unhappiness and low self-esteem.

### **2. Social Media Addiction and Work**

Continuous notifications on Social Media Apps cause distractions and students find difficulty in focusing on their study. This eventually leads to a new habit formation, procrastination. This results in delaying tasks and then completing the work when the deadline is near, which leads to significant distress. Social Media Addiction also disrupts the sleeping habits among the students and it can gradually lead to poor Time Management.

### **3. Social Media Addiction and Social Interaction Skills**

Social media is meant to help individuals connect with others, but using it too much can actually harm one's social skills. While it's easy to stay connected with friends and family online, it can also make it difficult to have real-life conversations with them. The more one relies on digital communication, the less they practice having meaningful face-to-face conversations.

In real life, people use words, facial expressions, and body language to understand each other and form relationships. But on social media, we mostly use text and pictures, which can be shallow and lack the emotional depth of real-life conversations. Over time, people who use social media too much might find it hard to talk to people face-to-face. They might struggle to understand social situations or read people's emotions. This can make them feel lonely and isolated, as they might find it hard to make real connections in the real world. Social media can also make it more difficult for people to understand and care about others. When they're behind a screen, they might not feel as connected to other people and might be less likely to be kind or understanding. Online conversations are often quick and brief, which makes it harder to listen carefully and build deeper relationships with others.

In brief, social media addiction has become a major problem in the current digital world. While social media can be great for connecting with others, sharing experiences, and staying informed, using it too much can be harmful to mental health. It negatively impacts an individual's self-esteem, decreases the capacity to work by distracting people, and makes it harder to have real-life social interactions. Understanding these effects is important, and we need more research to fully understand the problem.

## **Review of Literature**

Social media has completely changed the way people connect and interact nowadays. Though, it has many benefits, like helping us connect with others, express ourselves, and feel like we belong, there's also a darker side: addiction. When youth spend too much time on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, it can harm their mental health and personal relationships. This review explores how social media addiction can negatively affect self-esteem, anxiety, and social skills. It uses both theories and real-world studies to understand this complex issue.

Social media addiction is when someone spends excess amount of time on social media, even though it's causing issues in their life. It's like other addictions, where people can't stop even if they want to. They become obsessed with being online and need to spend more time on social media to feel pleasure. It's not just about the amount of time spent, but also about the emotional connection youth have with these social media platforms. They often use social media to seek approval from others, constantly chase likes and comments, and compare themselves to others.

A theory that explains why masses get addicted to social media is the Cognitive Behavioral Model of Addiction. This Cognitive Behavioral model suggests that individuals believe social media is essential for getting social approval and feeling better. This belief makes them use social media a lot to get constant validation and reassurance. Another theory, Social Comparison Theory given by Festinger, (1954), says that people judge themselves by comparing themselves to others. On social media, where people often show only the best parts of their lives, this comparison can make individuals feel bad about themselves, which can lead to social media addiction.

One of the major issues with social media addiction is that it can hurt individual's self-esteem. Self-esteem is how much a person values themselves. It is really important for our mental health and how we see the world. Studies have shown that the more time people spend on social media, the lower their self-esteem gets. This is because masses often compare themselves to others on social media, especially in terms of looks, success, and lifestyle.

The number of likes, comments, and followers we get on social media can also affect our self-esteem. When we get positive feedback, it can make us feel good about ourselves. However, if we don't get the attention we expect, it can make us feel rejected and lower our self-esteem. Valkenburg, Krenn, and Peter (2017) found that getting a lot of likes and positive comments can temporarily boost our self-esteem, but this feeling doesn't last long. We might then become more reliant on social media for validation.

Our self-esteem can also become unstable due to social media. Marengo et al. (2018) found that people who rely on social media for validation often experience ups and downs in their self-esteem. Constantly checking for feedback and trying to present a perfect image can create an emotional rollercoaster. This can lead to more stress, anxiety, and difficulty dealing with real-life challenges.

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Valkenburg et al. (2017) found that young people who often compare themselves to others on social media often have lower self-esteem. Social media platforms like Instagram, which focus on looks, can make people feel worse about their own appearance (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). The pressure to look perfect on social media can be harmful, especially to the teenagers and young adults. Researches have also shown

that people relying on social media for validation often experience ups and downs in their self-esteem. They feel bad when they don't get enough attention (Marengo et al., 2018).

Sherman et al. (2016) found that people who post photos and get a lot of likes on social media feel good about themselves temporarily. However, this feeling doesn't last long, and they need constant positive feedback to feel good about themselves. This shows how social media can affect our self-perception, especially for those who already struggle with low self-esteem.

The constant notifications and information overload on social media can also contribute to anxiety. We feel pressured to always be connected and respond quickly, which can lead to stress and anxiety (Becker et al., 2013).

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While social media can help us connect with people around the world, using it too much can harm our social skills. Social media often replaces face-to-face interactions, which are important for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011).

Online interactions are often superficial and lack the emotional depth of real-life conversations (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011). This can make it harder for people to have meaningful conversations and understand others' feelings (Bavelier et al., 2016). Spending too much time on social media can also make people feel more isolated. Even though social media can help us connect with others, it doesn't replace real-life friendships and relationships. In fact, the more time we spend on social media, the lonelier we might feel (Primack et al., 2017). Social media can make us less likely to spend time with real people, which can weaken our relationships and make it harder to form strong bonds.

This review shows how the social media addiction can negatively affect our self-esteem, work and the social skills. Although social media can help us connect with others, however, by using it excessively can lead to problems. Social media can make us feel worse about ourselves through constant comparison and the need for validation. It can also increase anxiety due to the pressure to present a perfect image and the fear of missing out. Moreover, social media can harm our social skills by reducing face-to-face interactions and limiting emotional depth in relationships.

As social media continues to be a major part of our lives, it's important to understand how it can affect our mental health. The researches that will be done in future should focus on ways to use social media more mindfully.

## **Methodology**

### **Objectives:**

This research motive is to understand how social media addiction affects people's mental health and social skills. It will focus on how socialmedia use can impact self esteem, anxiety, and social interactions. The goal is to uncover the reasons why social media can lead to isolation instead of connection. These are the following objectives that will guide the research:

1. To examine the relationship among Social Media Addiction and Self Esteem
2. To explore the correlation among social Media Addiction and work
3. To correlate Social Media Addiction and Social Interactions Skills

## Hypothesis

- H1: Higher social media addiction correlates with lower self-esteem
- H2: Social media addiction is linked with lower levels of work
- H3: Social media addiction impacts on social skills

## Research Design:

### Descriptive Research Design

This study utilizes a research design which is descriptive, to analyse the topic, “From Connection to Isolation: How Social Media Addiction Affects Self -Esteem, work and Social Interaction Skills”.

## Data Collection

This research motive is to analyze social media addiction and its impact on self- esteem, work and social interaction skills. These variables have been used on a population of students studying at the Lovely Professional University of Punjab, private University in India. In November 2024, 124 University students' data were selected.

The study focused on University students aged 18-25, a group known for experiencing self-esteem and work issues. This age group was chosen because they are going through a significant life transition, making them particularly susceptible to the psychological effects of social media. Convenience sampling method is used, selecting students who were easily accessible and willing to participate. This approach allowed for efficient recruitment while ensuring a diverse sample representing various cultural backgrounds. This diversity was important to understand how social media addiction might impact individuals from different cultural contexts. this heterogeneity provided a comprehensive view of how social media addiction impacts the self -esteem, anxiety and social interaction skills.

## Data Collection Tools

### 1. Social Media Addiction Scale

The Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) is a tool that measures how addicted someone is to social media. It checks time duration they spend on social media , how much they think about it, and how it affects their life. The SMAS helps to identify people who might be struggling with social media addiction and need help to reduce their excessive use. It can also be used in research to understand the impact of socialmedia on mental well-being.

### 2. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Student Version

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students ( UWES-S ) is a tool that measures how engaged students are in their studies. This scale helps to understand how motivated and involved students are in their academic work. Higher engagement is linked to better academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. The UWES-S uses a 7-point Likert scale to measure how often students engage in certain behaviors related to their studies. This tool can help identify students who might need extra support to improve their academic engagement. It can also guide educators in developing strategies to boost student engagement and mental health.

### 3. Social Skills Inventory Scale

The Social Skills Inventory (SSI) is a tool that measures a person's social skills. It looks at both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. This includes how well a person can express themselves (expressivity), understand others (sensitivity), and manage social situations (control). The SSI helps people understand



their strengths and weaknesses in social situations, and it can be used to identify areas where they might need to improve their social skills. How SSI is used:

The **SSI** is usually administered as a **self-report questionnaire** in which the subjects are asked to rate their behavior on various social interaction-related statements. It can be completed in a short time (approximately 15-20 minutes).

#### 4. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a popular tool used to measure a person's overall self-worth or self-esteem. This scale helps to understand how positively or negatively a person views themselves. It is a tool used to measure how much a person values themselves. Given by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, it consists of 10 statements that people rate on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The higher the score, the higher a person's self-esteem. The scale includes both positive and negative statements about self-worth. The score ranges from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating greater self-esteem.

The RSES is a valuable tool for both clinicians and researchers. It helps to understand how self-esteem relates to mental health, behavior, and social well-being.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Correlation Table**

Correlation Table with Descriptive Statistics						
Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	r with SMASTOTAL	r with UWESTOTAL	r with SKITOTAL	r with RSETOTAL
SMASTOTAL	48.47	20.136	1.000	0.056 (ns)	-0.053 (ns)	0.007 (ns)
UWESTOTAL	25.56	11.953	0.056 (ns)	1.000	0.577 **	0.294 **
SKITOTAL	69.84	36.401	-0.053 (ns)	0.577 **	1.000	0.307 **
RSETOTAL	22.73	6.145	0.007 (ns)	0.294 **	0.307 **	1.000

- N=124 for all correlations.
- Significance ( 2-tailed ):
- \*\*Significant Correlation at the 0.01 level.

**Table (a) : Correlation among Social Media Addiction and Work**

Variable	SMASTOTAL	UWESTOTAL
SMASTOTAL	1.000	0.056 (ns)
UWESTOTAL (Work)	0.056 (ns)	1.000

*There is a very weak positive and non-significant correlation ( $r=0.056$ ) between Social Media Addiction and Work. This indicates no meaningful relationship, depicting that levels of social media addiction do not reliably influence work-related functioning in this sample.*

**Table (b): Correlation among Social Media Addiction and Social Interaction Skills**

Variable	SMASTOTAL	SKITOTAL
SMASTOTAL	1.000	-0.053 (ns)
SKITOTAL (Social Skills)	-0.053 (ns)	1.000

*The correlation among Social Media Addiction and Social Interaction Skills is very weak and negative ( $r=-0.053$ ), and also non-significant. This suggests a negligible tendency for higher social media use to be associated with slightly lower social skills, but the result is not statistically reliable.*

**Table (c): Correlation among Social Media Addiction and Self-Esteem**

Variable	SMASTOTAL	RSETOTAL
SMASTOTAL	1.000	0.007 (ns)
RSETOTAL (Self-Esteem)	0.007 (ns)	1.000

*There is no meaningful correlation ( $r=0.007$ ) among Social Media Addiction and Self-Esteem. The value is extremely close to zero and not statistically significant, indicating that these two variables are not related in this dataset.*

**Table 2: Summary Table: Hypothesis Support**

Hypothesis	Correlation	Significance	Support
H1: Social media addiction → ↓ Self-esteem	$r = 0.007$	Not significant	✗ Not supported
H2: Social media addiction → ↓ Work	$r = 0.056$	Not significant	✗ Not supported
H3: Social media addiction → ↓ Social skills	$r = -0.053$	Not significant	✗ Not supported

*None of the three hypotheses are supported by the data. All observed correlations are weak and statistically non-significant, depicting no reliable evidence of effect of socialmedia addiction on self-esteem, work performance, or social skills in this sample. Perhaps in future, studies may consider larger samples or additional control variables to explore these relationships further.*

## Discussion

The correlation analysis explores the relationships between four variables: Social Media Addiction (SMASTOTAL), Work performance (UWESTOTAL), Social Interaction Skills (SKITOTAL), and Self-Esteem (RSETOTAL). The findings indicate that Social Media Addiction (SMASTOTAL) operates independently, showing no significant linear relationship with the other three variables. The correlation coefficients between SMASTOTAL and Work ( $r=0.056$ ), Social Interaction Skills ( $r=-0.053$ ), and Self-Esteem ( $r=0.007$ ) are all very close to zero and statistically insignificant, suggesting it measures a distinct construct.

Conversely, work performance (UWESTOTAL) exhibits more meaningful connections. It has a moderate to strong, statistically significant correlation with Social Interaction Skills ( $r=0.577$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), indicating that higher work performance is associated with better social skills. Furthermore, Work shows a weaker but still significant positive correlation with Self-Esteem ( $r=0.294$ ), suggesting a modest link between better work performance and higher self-worth.

Social Interaction Skills (SKITOTAL) appears to be a central connecting variable. It not only strongly correlates with Work ( $r=0.577$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) but also has a statistically significant correlation with Self-Esteem ( $r=0.307$ ), suggesting that individuals with better social skills tend to have higher self-esteem. This highlights the potential role of social skills in both professional and personal well-being.

Finally, Self-Esteem (RSETOTAL) is positively correlated with both Work ( $r=0.294$ ) and Social Interaction Skills ( $r=0.307$ ), with both correlations being statistically significant. These moderate

associations suggest that higher self-esteem is linked to better performance in both work and social domains. Notably, the absence of a significant correlation between Self-Esteem and Social Media Addiction reinforces the idea that social media addiction is a separate factor from these core psychological constructs.

## Conclusion

The study revealed that how social media addicts seems to be its own thing, not really connected to how they perform at work, how good they are with people, or how they feel about themselves. It's like social media addiction operates in its own boundary here. However, when we look at work, social skills, and self-esteem, it's a different scenario. These three are all tied together. Doing well at work seems to go hand-in-hand with having good social skills and feeling good about yourself. Plus, people having good social skills also tend to have higher self-esteem. So, these three areas seem to support each other in a positive way, which probably helps with both work and personal life.

In brief, the correlation analysis depicts a structure where Work, Social Interaction Skills, and Self-Esteem are meaningfully interconnected, while Social Media Addiction stands apart with no significant linear relationships with the others. These study provide insights that is valuable into the distinct role of socialmedia addiction and the interrelations among work performance, social skills, and self-esteem.

## Limitations

Since the analysis relies solely on correlations, we cannot determine cause-and-effect relationships. Even if variables are linked, we don't know if one directly influences the other. The study didn't compare different groups, such as by age, gender, or how much social media they use. This means we can't see if these relationships differ across various segments of the population.

All the information have come from self-report questionnaires. These can be affected by biases where people try to present themselves favorably, have trouble remembering accurately, or interpret questions differently, which could impact the reliability of the data .Furthermore, most of the correlations involving social media addiction were not statistically significant. This could mean there's truly no relationship, or it could be due to the study not having enough statistical power, especially if the number of participants was small.

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