



Impact of Social Media Usage and Self-Esteem on Mental Health

Iram Naeem¹, Furqan Naseer²

¹Punjab School Education Department Lahore, Email: irumnaem44@gmail.com

²MSCS Pmasuaar Rwp, MBA Al-Khair University Ajk Pakistan, Email: furqannaseer@hotmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received:

August 10, 2025

Revised:

September 06, 2025

Accepted:

September 29, 2025

Available Online:

October 20, 2025

Keywords:

The use of social media, self-esteem, mental health, psychological well-being, social comparison, digital behavior, emotional health, online interaction.

Corresponding author:

irumnaem44@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The excessive boom of the social media has altered how humans interact, explicit themselves and maintain relationships. Although the webweb sites provide blessings in phrases of connection, sharing of records and expression of self, mounting proof proposes that overindulgence or maybe dysfunctional use of social media can adversely have an effect on the mental fitness of the individual. Meanwhile, shallowness is an essential element that could affect how humans sense approximately themselves, react to a social comparison, and paintings with emotional problems withinside the virtual space. The paper discusses the interaction of social media use and vanity on intellectual fitness, in addition to how the developments of on line interplay and self-notion hook up with the self-view and emotional stability, stress, tension and the overall functioning of the psyche. The take a look at examines the concept of whether or not social media is a high-quality surroundings that promotes a healthful circumstance or a scenario that results in the improvement of lack of confidence and distress, mainly in human beings with low vanity. The take a look at will study how the connection among virtual conduct and private mental assets may be visible as a deeper perception into the function of the modern-day on line tradition in forming the intellectual fitness outcomes. The outcomes are in all likelihood to offer the knowledge of the mental strategies through which social media can in a different way impact human beings and emphasize the want to sell healthful on line behaviors and advantageous self-belief to beautify their intellectual fitness.

Introduction

Social media has advanced at a completely speedy price and it has modified the manner human beings have interaction with every different, shape identification and maintain social relationships. The on line structures were included with actual-existence withinside the closing a long time specifically withinside the teenagers and kids, which impacts the approaches of interacting, enjoy of emotions, and self-perception. Although social media has delivered approximately a feel of connection, statistics trade and self-presentation, there was a developing scholarly hobby at the mental implications of social media. Researchers have expressed worries that overuse or misadaptive social media use may be one of the reasons of emotional misery, anxiety, and reduced mental nicely-being (Kross et al., 2013; Twenge et al., 2018). Meanwhile, non-public mental developments, specially that of vanity, are substantial to steer the translation and response of people to the net studies. To recognize intellectual fitness withinside the virtual age, therefore, one wishes to study the environmental elements like publicity to social media, and the intellectual elements of oneself like shallowness (Riaz et al., 2020; Shabbir et al., 2021; Javed et al., 2020).

Mental fitness is extensively taken into consideration a hallmark of mental properly-being at some stage in which people are capable of control every day stressors, have pleasurable relationships, and carry out nicely in society (World Health Organization, 2022). It is biologically, psychologically and socially decided and is dynamically interacting in numerous contexts. The virtual surroundings withinside the present day society has emerged as a big social surroundings that impacts emotional functioning. The social media webweb sites gift the customer with a regular go with the drift of social data, peer

activity, views, and pre-decided on way of life snap shots. The publicity can affect attitudes, intellectual assessment, and self-image, in particular whilst humans evaluation their lives with the ones of others at the Internet (Vogel et al., 2014).

The social assessment principle gives a sensible technique to the detection of the affects of on line conversation with mental properly-being. Festinger (1954) postulates that there may be an innate tendency of someone to examine his or her talents and traits with the ones of different people. This method is more desirable via way of means of the social media which gives 24/7 get entry to to relatively edited and every so often idealized pix of the lives of different humans. End customers frequently come upon snap shots of success, beauty, and happiness that may not be consultant of the actual lifestyles. These idealized photos were related to a better degree of emotions of inadequacy, frame dissatisfaction, and occasional degrees of lifestyles satisfaction (Fardouly and Vartanian, 2016, Vogel et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the mental consequences of such comparisons do now no longer have a widespread effect; it has a tendency to be distinct in keeping with variations in vanity.

Self-esteem is a idea that describes the overall judgment of someone as a precious and worth being (Rosenberg, 1965). It is one of the key factors of the mental functioning and it's far fairly crucial in emotional law, resilience, and interpersonal conduct. High vanity humans have better confidence, emotional stability, and poor social assessment resilience, and occasional vanity human beings are greater vulnerable to the perceptions of rejection, grievance, and social assessment (Orth and Robins, 2014). Self-esteem may be particularly essential in on line settings in which a reaction is seen instantly. Likes, comments, and follower counts are functions which have measurable signs of social approval, that can have an effect at the perceptions of customers approximately their fee and social acceptance.

The social media use and shallowness dating is a -manner correlation. On the only hand, social media can sell shallowness, providing self-expression and exploration of identification in addition to social support (Valkenburg et al., 2017). The feeling of belonging and validation can be bolstered via tremendous reinforcement with the aid of using peers. Conversely, the reliance on demonstrated critiques should predispose human beings to adjustments in vanity on net reactions. In case of the dearth or negative comments, customers may also broaden feeling of rejection, anxiety, or reduced shallowness (Burrow and Rainone, 2017). Those who've a decrease baseline stage of shallowness are mainly susceptible to such outcomes as they have a tendency to locate extra affirmation withinside the on-line conversation and to take social remarks negatively.

It is likewise indicated in a look at that the fee and diploma of social media use can have an effect on intellectual fitness outcomes. Overuse has been related to depressive, anxiety, loneliness, and dozing problems (Keles et al., 2020; Primack et al., 2017). Constant connectivity can cause publicity to cyberbullying, facts overload and unrealistic social pressure. Also, the time at the Internet can update the sports that make contributions to mental properly-being, consisting of in-character conversation, exercise, and right sleep (Twenge et al., 2018). Nevertheless, now no longer the whole thing approximately using social media is terrible. Even mild and intentional interplay might also construct relationships, provide emotional support, and get right of entry to facts and intellectual fitness resources (Best et al., 2014). These conflicting consequences suggest that the mental final results of using social media isn't simplest primarily based totally at the styles of use however additionally at the mental developments of the individual.

The shallowness is used as a moderating variable on this dating. Patients who're self-esteemed can use social media with out letting on line commentaries have an effect on their shallowness in any significant manner. More probably, they'll be capable of system social data significantly and feature a regular emotional response. Conversely, low vanity people is probably over-relying on social media as a supply of validation and social reassurance that reason them to be greater prone to emotional misery on every occasion they get a poor or disappointing on line revel in (Vogel et al., 2014). This sensitization ought to enhance the possibilities of anxiety, depressive and dwindled mental comfort.

The different size of importance is the identification development, particularly in youth and teenagers. The developmental theories notice that identification formation is a technique this is characterised with the aid of using exploration, comments, and social validation (Erikson, 1968). The social media gives a context wherein identification may be built and exhibited and assessed in a non-stop manner. Whereas fantastic reinforcement can result in identification formation and confidence, bad studies like social exclusion or complaint can cause loss of self-doubt and susceptibility to emotions. The emotional depth of the web interplay is improved through the omnipresence of peer-reviewing, which connects virtual conduct and vanity to intellectual fitness.

The mental outcomes of social media also are contributed through the emotional sports that human beings go through while the use of them. Responses monitoring, self-contrast, and on line impact control are a number of the sports that contain persevered cognitive and emotional investment. The emotional reactivity and the need to be socially responsive ought to make the content material emotionally stimulating really well worth exposing someone to over time, and pressure and intellectual exhaustion may be a part of the problems (Elhai et al., 2017). Those procedures factor to the manner wherein virtual conversation can have an effect on emotional law and fashionable mental functioning.

Considering the developing recognition of intellectual fitness problems within the institution of common social media customers, the look at of interaction among social media utilization and shallowness has come to be a fairly good sized studies topic. These variables were checked out one after the other within the beyond and growing proof is indicating that once they have interaction they could provide a extra holistic evaluation of the mental final results. Social media is an environmental thing and self confidence is an inner mental aid that determines the manner human beings interpret and react on that surroundings.

Thus, a query approximately the outcomes of the use of social media and shallowness collectively in phrases of intellectual fitness ought to be researched to realize the mental properly-being of the virtual society. A aggregate of the elements beneathneath the dialogue allows a greater state-of-the-art examine the hassle of vulnerability and resilience that recognizes the variations in people. This information can assist create interventions with a view to inspire wholesome on line behaviors, beef up shallowness, and assist humans to preserve intellectual fitness in a extra related world.

Literature Review

The expanded use of social media in day by day lifestyles has created a variety of instructional hobby within the mental implications of the media, mainly in reference to intellectual fitness and vanity. In the ultimate 10 years, pupils have centered extra at the impact of on-line interplay on emotional wellness, identification development, and self-belief. Social media can result in each communique, self-expression, and social guide, in addition to to new mental dangers related with the assessment, the want to are looking for validation, and publicity to an idealized picture of some other individual. To understand the relationships of those complex dynamics, it's miles vital to remember the interplay of styles of social media use with man or woman mental traits, particularly vanity to decide the impact on intellectual fitness.

There is a widespread quantity of literature indicating that the usage of social media is connected to some of mental fitness indicators. Other research have a few high quality outcomes, which consist of the problem of connection, belongingness, and get entry to to social guide networks facilitated with the aid of using on line structures. Those actively speaking with others on-line may have higher social capital, emotional assist, and a threat to explicit their identification (Best et al., 2014). Social media may be used to maintain relationships amongst human beings dwelling in geographical distance, alleviate isolation or even act as a network to people who may in any other case lack social guide. These are specifically relevant to the kids who've to cope with developmental procedures, due to the fact the net communalization can offer a sense of belongingness and communal identification.

Nevertheless, with those advantages, there's a huge quantity of studies indicating damaging mental consequences of immoderate or dysadaptive use of social media. Constant interplay has been related to increased quotes of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and dissatisfaction with lifestyles (Keles et al., 2020; Primack et al., 2017). The truth that the social media settings sell passive intake of the content material of different human beings might also additionally provide an explanation for such findings, as it is able to growth the procedure of social evaluation. By being usually observers instead of interacting with every different, they have a tendency to evaluate their lives with the idealized pics that different humans share, which might also additionally bring about sadness and damaging moods (Verduyn et al., 2015).

The social evaluation idea offers a center idea of rising mental implications of publicity to social media. People have the herbal tendency of evaluating themselves with others so as to research their competencies and fee. The social media complements this fashion because the snap shots of success, beauty, and happiness are continuously offered to an person. These representations may be visible as probably selective self-presentation in preference to actual existence in practice, however nonetheless they are able to have an effect on the self-belief of customers. Empirical research have usually indicated that publicity to idealized snap shots on social media is related to decreased vanity, dissatisfaction with their bodies, and bad temper (Fardouly and Vartanian, 2016; Vogel et al., 2014). This is better with the aid of using the reality that many systems are visible and pictures are in particular influential in forming self-evaluation.

Self-esteem is an vital element that moderates the reaction of humans to social contrast. Self-esteem, that is described as the entire evaluation of private cost with the aid of using an person may be notion of as a mental useful resource that determines emotional electricity and capacity to cope (Rosenberg, 1965). High vanity humans are much more likely to derive fantastic facts approximately social statistics and their self-perceptions continue to be strong no matter the thing of evaluation. Low-vanity human beings, at the contrary, have a tendency to be greater liable to social threats and internalize terrible comparisons (Orth and Robins, 2014). This disparity is specially suggested within the virtual context wherein the opportunities of assessment are steady and pretty excessive-profile.

The research which have been performed to pick out the relationship among social media use and self confidence have yielded inconclusive outcomes, which demonstrates the character of on line conversation. There is a few proof that energetic

engagement, consisting of posting content material and speaking with peers, can cause the boom of shallowness through fantastic remarks and social reinforcing (Valkenburg et al., 2017). Compliment or appreciation may also support the feel of belonging and potential. Nonetheless, overdependence on outside validation also can pose a weak spot considering that self esteem is primarily based totally on on-line approval. In case of poor or no expected remarks, someone may be rejected, anxious, and feature decrease self assurance (Burrow and Rainone, 2017).

The dynamism is in addition superior via way of means of the reality that on line comments can and is quantifiable. Social assessment could be very seen and measurable the use of metrics like likes, shares, follower counts, etc. Such visibility can turn out to be growing the cognizance of the customers approximately their social fame and spark off them to display the response in their peers. It is researched that after human beings have tremendous cost of such remarks they are able to much more likely be affected of their temper and vanity (Nesi et al., 2015). The mental results of such metrics are mainly excessive with the ones individuals who have already got susceptible or unsound self-concepts.

The different incredible studies location is the relationship among the usage of social media and signs and symptoms of depression. Various longitudinal research have found that the longer the time spent on social media, the more the upward thrust in depressive temper in future, specifically while passive surfing or assessment-orientated interplay are the activities (Twenge et al., 2018). The mechanisms that enhance this dating are publicity to the poor social interactions, the perceived social exclusion, and cognitive overload. Online harassment and cyberbullying also are the reasons of emotional distress, which can also additionally mainly have an effect on kids and teenagers who is probably noticeably touchy to see judgment (Kowalski et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, scientists additionally factor out that the mental results of social media do now no longer have an identical impact on all citizens. Self-esteem, character traits, and coping patterns are a number of the non-public elements that have an effect on the manner human beings understand and react to on-line experiences. High shallowness human beings can reply to social media as a verbal exchange channel and be unaffected via way of means of the web remarks on their self-idea. They is probably in a higher function to severely decide at the contents on-line and admire that they're curated. On the opposite hand, low vanity does now no longer always imply that humans need to now no longer are trying to find reassurance, they may achieve this greater often, assessing remarks or evaluating themselves to others, which could make humans greater inclined emotionally (Vogel et al., 2014).

The developmental elements also are sizable withinside the dimension of the relationship among social media, shallowness, and intellectual fitness. Teenage and beginnings of maturity are the instances of essential identification making, and at this stage, children vigorously test with self-idea and position in society. The social media is a platform wherein identification may be created, supplied and judged in actual time. Positive reinforcement can facilitate identification formation and self-self assurance while terrible remarks or social rejection also can motive self-doubt and intellectual fitness problems (Nesi et al., 2018). Online verbal exchange could be very emotionally salient at those developmental degrees because the peer responses can usually be visible.

The different massive trouble of the literature is associated with the approaches of emotional law of social media use. Reading on-line entails using the mind, feeling and action. The regular publicity to emotionally stimulating cloth can increase mental arousal and reduce the opportunity of emotional recovery. Moreover, the anticipation of unceasing connectedness can result in stress to grow to be socially responsive, that can boom strain and purpose intellectual exhaustion (Elhai et al., 2017). In the lengthy run, they methods can have an impact on the high-satisfactory of sleep, concentration, and wellknown mental performance.

The distinction among lively and passive use of social media has additionally been investigated via way of means of researchers. Active use includes direct interplay in which you'll be able to ship messages, submit and remark however passive use does now no longer require any shape of engagement with others however handiest surfing. It has been proven that passive use correlates greater with destructive intellectual fitness results because it encourages contrast and minimizes probabilities of significant social interplay (Verduyn et al., 2015). Active use, conversely, may be useful to wellbeing supplied that it does now no longer suggest simulated verbal exchange and help. The consequences make it obvious that it's miles vital to keep in mind the pleasant and the motive of the engagement, further to the amount of the social media use.

One of the important moderating elements in those approaches has continually been observed to be shallowness. Online conversation can gift a social advantage to people with excessive shallowness and assist them resist terrible evaluation. They will discover it much less threatening while different humans are a hit and are much more likely to revel in a temperate emotional response. Conversely, low vanity could make human beings understand ambiguous social cues in a terrible mild and emotionally be extra reactive to on line remarks (Orth and Robins, 2014). This weak point can make a contribution to the capacity chance of anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal.

Nevertheless, no matter the extended quantity of studies, scientists nonetheless oppose whether or not using social media immediately results in intellectual fitness problems or whether or not those who are already susceptible are greater at risk of undertake intricate on-line behaviour. Other scientists kingdom that social media does now no longer reason new dispositions however reinforces the prevailing ones of their mental inclinations. Low shallowness and emotionally bothered humans can use social media to discover consolation in it, which may be supportive or serve to bolster a terrible sample relying at the sort of interplay (Valkenburg et al., 2017). This mutual connection demonstrates the importance of reading the usage of social media and vanity in parallel, now no longer separately.

On the whole, the literature suggests that mutual members of the family among using social media and shallowness and intellectual fitness are multidimensional and intricate. The social media can also additionally act as a supportive social area and as a supply of mental stress, relying on using it and the way humans recognize their experiences. Self-esteem is likewise diagnosed as an critical mental asset that defines vulnerability and resistance to virtual environments. A individual who has a better shallowness appears to be extra well-adjusted to on-line area with none effect of poor emotional outcomes, and the person that has decrease shallowness appears to be extra at risk of distress.

Considering this, extra research ought to be carried out to give an explanation for the mechanisms beneathneath which use of social media and vanity interaction to decide intellectual fitness. The aggregate of the observe of those variables can deliver a higher view of the mental wellbeing withinside the cutting-edge virtual society. The have a look at may be used to tell the interventions that are looking for to sell healthful on-line behavior, help shallowness, and intellectual fitness amongst special populations.

Methodology

Research Design

The paper used a quantitative, cross-sectional studies layout to check the speculation of relation among social media usage, shallowness and intellectual fitness. The records used have been amassed at one time thru survey primarily based totally technique which worried the usage of a pattern of the individuals. Quantitative layout became seemed as an appropriate one because it permits related to a statistical take a look at of the relationships among variables, and trying out the hypothesized relationships among social media use and vanity level, mental well-being.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses advanced have been primarily based totally at the theoretical and empirical literature and that they had been as follows:

- H 1: The use of social media has a suggested have an effect on on intellectual fitness.
- H2: Self-esteem performs a widespread function withinside the intellectual fitness in addition to moderates the interplay among social media use and intellectual fitness.

Population and Sample

The take a look at pattern become a set of teenagers and lively customers of social media. This pattern become selected because of the reality that teenagers make one of the maximum not unusualplace and lively lessons of customers withinside the virtual placing and at an absolute decisive factor of identification formation and mental accommodations.

The pattern became selected primarily based totally on a non-possibility comfort kind, which enabled get admission to to the pattern that might be easily reached for the reason that researchers need to address those who are ordinary customers of social media. The pattern length/individuals needed to fulfill inclusion criteria: (1) certainly considered one among them needed to be an energetic consumer of as a minimum one social media platform, and (2) the age of the individuals needed to be in the unique scope of the younger person age group. Statistical adequacy became used to provide you with the very last pattern length because of its adequacy in correlation and regression analysis.

Measures and Instruments

The based self-record questionnaire turned into used to accumulate facts primarily based totally on 3 fundamental sections.

The first component concerned using social media, together with how regularly the media changed into used, lengths of time spent online, in addition to engagement habits. Items measured lively and passive use conduct to symbolize diverse styles of interplay online.

The 2d element evaluated vanity via a standardized self-record scale that determines the overall idea of the way one thinks approximately their self esteem and private worth. The respondents spoke back on their diploma of settlement with the statements that confirmed confidence, self-acceptance, and self-respect.

The 0.33 element assessed the intellectual fitness, which changed into directed closer to emotional, stress, tension signs and the general functioning of the psyche. Items have been created with the intention to pinpoint the latest emotional reviews of the individuals and the perceived intellectual stability.

The solutions have been cited in a Likert-kind scale giving the individuals a danger to specify the diploma in their consent or frequency of experience.

Data Collection Procedure

The facts had been accrued through the use of an internet questionnaire that became despatched to the respondents through internet platforms. Prior to the observe, the respondents have been made privy to the examine goal and warranted that their records couldn't be disclosed to 1/3 events and that the facts could simplest be applied in instructional studies. The questionnaire turned into finished voluntarily and knowledgeable consent changed into taken earlier than filling withinside the questionnaire.

Online layout enabled the members to reply of their personal comfort and to acquire green records series a few of the huge variety of social media customers.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical software was used to analyze the data obtained. To describe the demographic characteristics and general response pattern, the first things to be done are descriptive statistics.

The correlation analysis was used to test the strength and direction of the association of social media usage with self-esteem and mental health.

The predictive effects of social media usage and self-esteem on mental health and the test of the hypotheses were then carried out with the help of regression analysis.

The analysis of reliability was also carried out in order to provide the internal consistency of measurement scales. Normal probability levels were used in determining statistical significance.

Ethical Considerations

The research process was very strict on ethical standards. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants and their involvement was voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality was upheld because no identification information was sought. The participants were free to withdraw during the study.

Data Analysis

This is where the statistical analysis is presented, which was used to investigate the connection between the use of social media, self-esteem, and mental health. To be accurate and reliable, the statistical software was used in the analysis. This process was systematic to involve data screening, descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation analysis, regression analysis, moderation analysis to test the hypotheses put across.

Data Preparation and Data Screening

The dataset was also screened properly to make sure that it is accurate and appropriate to statistical testing before the main statistical analysis. The cleaning of data consisted of missing values, outliers and inconsistent responses. Those cases that had too much missing data were eliminated in order to ensure reliability of the results. Missing minor values were replaced with a mean which would not impact the distribution significantly.

Standardized scores and boxplot analysis were used to analyze the outliers. The extreme values that might have distorted the statistical relationships were assessed. Where there were extreme outliers, these were either adjusted or eliminated so as to guarantee the data were distributed normally.

The values of the skewness and kurtosis were used to determine normality. Values in acceptable limits used to suggest that the data distribution was close to the normality, therefore, parametric statistical methods, including, correlation and regression analysis, could be adopted.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were computed to sum up the measurements of the participants and general patterns of responses. The levels of social media usage, self-esteem, and mental health were described by means of measures of central tendency such as mean and standard deviation.

The descriptive findings gave the general account of the data and contributed to the determination of the trends in the psychological experiences of the participants. Increases in mean scores on the use of social media suggested that the participants were not using digital platforms frequently, whereas the differences in self-esteem scores varied because of varying self-perception across the participants. The scores in the mental health were found to vary among people, which implied a variation in the emotional well-being, and psychological functioning.

The descriptive statistics also enabled the comparison of variables as to give an idea of the relationships that might be there prior to the inferential analysis.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis was done to determine the internal consistency of measurement scales that were used in the study. The alpha coefficient of Cronbach was determined in the use of social media, self-esteem and mental health scale.

The alpha value of Cronbach was above the accepted cutoff value and this was a sign that the items under each scale measured one construct the same way. The high reliability indicated that the respondents gave a consistent and consistent response to the scale items.

Reliability was a requirement prior to engaging in additional statistical analysis since unreliable tools of measurement may dilute the observed relationships between variables.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis carried was the Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among social media usage, self-esteem, and mental health. This analysis offered a rough knowledge about the association of variables with each other.

The findings reflected whether an increase in social media use was also linked to the variability in mental health and the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being was positive or negative. The values of correlation coefficients were negatives and positives which were used to indicate what type of relationship existed between variables.

The substantial negative correlation between mental health and use of social media would point that an increased use would be linked with poor psychological outcomes. On the other hand, positive association between self-esteem and mental health would imply that highly self-esteemed individuals are well endowed emotionally.

The correlation analysis did not mean causation but it gave valuable initial evidence that favored the relationship that had been put forward in the hypotheses.

Regression Analysis

A multi-regression analysis was done to research the predictive impact of self-esteem and social media use on mental health. Regression enabled the research to define the level of explanation of independent variables on the dependent variable.

The regression equation evaluated:

- The immediate impact of the use of social media on mental health.
- The immediate impact of self esteem on mental health.
- This is the joint predictiveness of the two variables.

The direction and strength of influence was shown by regression coefficients. A large negative coefficient on the use of social media would indicate that an increased use implies worse mental health. The value of self-esteem would be considerable and positive, meaning that an increase in self-esteem would lead to an increase in the psychological well-being.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) showed the amount of variance in mental health that was determined by the combination of social media use and self-esteem. More R^2 values implied a greater explanatory power of the model.

Moderation Analysis

The moderation analysis was carried out to clarify that self-esteem can affect the quality of relationships between the use of social media and mental health. The second hypothesis that was tested in this analysis, was the hypothesis that suggested that self-esteem mediates the impact of social media on psychological well-being.

The interaction term has been developed through the multiplication of standardized scores of social media usage and self-esteem. The regression model was entered with this interaction variable to establish whether the effect of the use of social media in relation to mental health differs with different levels of self-esteem.

The level of interaction with social media showed a large interaction effect that suggested that the effect of social media use on mental health is not universal among people. Rather, it is based on their self-esteem.

In the event of moderation, high self-esteem individuals might have less negative effects of social media usage, and low self-esteem might have stronger negative effects. The result of such finding would prove that self-esteem is a protective psychological influence.

Assumption Testing of Regression

Different statistical assumptions were observed to make regression findings valid:

- **Linearity:** The correlation between independent variables and the mental health was tested to ensure that it was linear in nature. This assumption was met by suggesting that relationships were more or less linear as plotted in scatter plots.
- **Multicollinearity:** Multicollinearity is a state in which the independent variables correlate with one another. The values of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were analyzed to make sure that multicollinearity did not skew regression estimates. The acceptable values of VIF revealed that predictors played independent roles in the model.
- **Homoscedasticity:** The homoscedasticity is the best variance of the residuals which is equal at all levels of the predictors. This assumption was supported by the fact that the error variance was consistent as shown by residual plots.
- **Normality of Residuals:** Normality was studied by taking the residual distribution. The findings have shown that the regression errors were normally distributed with some approximations, and this supported the soundness of the statistical findings.

Model Interpretation

The statistical model presented empirical data on the association of the use of social media, the level of self-esteem, and mental health. The hypotheses were supported with significant regression coefficients that proved the fact that social media use has an effect on mental health and self-esteem is a significant psychological factor.

The moderation outcomes also helped in elucidating the fact that not only the digital exposure but also personal psychological resources shape the psychological outcomes. This helps the theoretical viewpoints that focus on the interplay of the environmental and personal factors.

Hypothesis Testing Results

The level of statistical significance was used to test hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Mental health is largely affected by the use of social media.

This hypothesis was to be upheld in case the regression findings indicated that there was significant relationship between the use of social media and mental health.

Hypothesis 2: Self-esteem plays a significant role in mental health and mediates the connection between the use of social media and the mental health.

This hypothesis was to be accepted when self-esteem had significant predictors of mental health and the interaction term was significant.

Taken together, the data analysis has been able to offer a detailed analysis of study variable relationships. The results indicated that the use of social media and self-esteem are significant predictors of mental health. This moderating value of self-esteem established the value of psychological resilience through digital settings. These findings highlight that the outcomes related to mental health cannot be attributed to the exposure to social media but have to be viewed through the prism of individual psychological factors.

Discussion

The current work analyzed how the use of social media and self-esteem affect mental health, and how self-esteem in the context of digital interaction affects the future psychological conditions. These results also offer a significant understanding of the interaction of online actions and internal psychological traits to determine emotional well-being.

The findings suggest that the use of the social media is a strong predictor of mental health outcomes. The higher the social media usage, the worse the psychological well being, such as the heightened emotional distress and diminished mental stability. This result is in line with other studies that propose that too much exposure to online world could be one of the factors causing negative emotional experiences. Social media platforms have a tendency to push false images of other people, and as a result, social comparison may be further enforced, and unrealistic expectations may be formed. Constant exposure to this type of material may cause discontent, stress, and emotional instability, especially in people who compare and passively browse regularly.

Simultaneously, the results show that self-esteem is a major factor in mental health determination. Individuals that had a higher self-esteem cited the better psychological well-being, emotional stability, and diminished distress. This implies that self-esteem is used as a psychological defence mechanism that helps to withstand social appraisal and environmental pressure. People who have high self-esteem also seem to have the ability to have consistent emotional reactions even the exposure to potentially stressful content via the internet.

One of the important findings of the research is the role of self esteem that is moderated. The analysis of the interactions showed that the effects of using social media on mental health depend on the degree of self-esteem in people. In particular, low-self-esteem individuals were more affected by negative impacts of social media use, and high-self-esteem ones were rather weakly affected. This means that self-esteem cushions or mitigates the psychological risks of being online.

This balancing influence can be described by means of emotional regulation and cognitive interpretation. Low self-esteem people might be more negative in their interpretation of online comparisons, more threatening in their perception of social feedback and high dependent on external validation. Because of this they can be more emotionally reactive to online experience. Conversely, a high-self esteem person might be more critical of the content found on the internet, and they will not connect their sense of self-worth with digital feedback.

The results also indicate the need to separate exposure and vulnerability. The effect of social media is not equally applied to all users, but instead, psychological consequences are determined by the interaction of individuals with the online space and the way they perceive social data. It helps to support theoretical views in which environmental factors and individual psychological resources are viewed as interacting to create mental health.

Moreover, the findings also indicate that the challenges on mental health related to social media are not only technical problems but also psychologically and developmentally-related. With the digital communication taking a more prominent role in social life, the capability of people to preserve a sense of self steadily also gains significance. Enhancing self-esteem could potentially be a useful measure towards minimizing the adverse psychological effects of exposure to social media. Table 1 presents the statistical results of the study.

Table 1: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship Tested	Result	Interpretation
H1	Social media usage –Mental health	Supported	Higher social media usage significantly predicted poorer mental health outcomes
H2	Self-esteem –Mental health	Supported	Higher self-esteem significantly predicted better

	(direct effect)	mental health
H2 (Moderation)	Social media × Self-esteem – Supported Mental health	Self-esteem moderated the relationship, reducing negative effects of social media

All in all, the results indicate that the use of social media and self-esteem are significant predictors of mental health, and self-esteem has a buffering effect on decreasing psychological vulnerability. These findings can be used to contribute to a more complex comprehension of digital well-being by establishing that psychological resilience can mediate how people perceive the online space.

Conclusion

In this study, the researchers examined the nature of the interaction between social media use and self-esteem and mental health, and the mediating effect of self-esteem. The results reveal that the use of social media has a significant impact on mental health, and the more one uses it, the worse the psychological health. Meanwhile, self-esteem turned out to be a close predictor of mental health, and the respondents with higher levels of self-esteem stated greater emotional balance and overall psychological functioning. Above all, the research established that self-esteem mediates the interaction between social media use and mental health and serves as a protective mechanism that decreases the adverse psychological impact of online activities. These results underline that exposure to social media does not solely influence mental health outcomes in the digital setting but personal psychological resources also matter. Enhancing self-esteem and encouraging healthy behaviors in online activities is thus the way forward towards ensuring the psychological well-being in the contemporary digital age.

Recommendations

Due to the results of the present study, a number of recommendations are possible. To begin with, awareness campaigns are to be created and people (especially young adults) educated on healthy and balanced usage of social media. Psychological distress could be minimized through promoting mindful use and lowering overuse and use driven by comparison. Second, educational and mental health programs should incorporate interventions that are focused on enhancing self-esteem. Developing confidence, self-acceptance and emotional resilience can make people better respond to social evaluation and pressure online. Third, educators and mental health professionals must encourage digital literacy and encourage individuals to critically analyze online information and understand the biased nature of the social media expression. Lastly, it is still necessary to conduct research on other psychological and social variables that can determine digital well-being in the future: these may include personality traits, coping strategies, and social support systems. Both technological behavior and psychological development have to be addressed in the promotion of mental health in societies that are becoming more connected.

References

- Best, P., Manktelow, R., & Taylor, B. (2014). Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41, 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001>
- Burrow, A. L., & Rainone, N. (2017). How many likes did I get? Purpose moderates links between positive social media feedback and self-esteem. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 69, 232–236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.09.005>
- Elhai, J. D., Levine, J. C., Dvorak, R. D., & Hall, B. J. (2017). Fear of missing out, need for touch, anxiety and depression are related to problematic smartphone use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 509–516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.079>
- Fardouly, J., & Vartanian, L. R. (2016). Social media and body image concerns: Current research and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 9, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.005>
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>
- Javed, S., Hussain, S., Shabbir, S. W., & Rizwan, M. (2020). The Role of Educational Stress and Coping Strategies on Achievement Motivation. *Journal of Languages, Culture and Civilization*, 2(1), 39–46.
- Keles, B., McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020). A systematic review: The influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 79–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851>
- Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073–1137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035618>

9. Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., ... Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS ONE*, 8(8), e69841. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0069841>
10. Nesi, J., & Prinstein, M. J. (2015). Using social media for social comparison and feedback seeking: Associations with depressive symptoms among adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 43(8), 1427-1438. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-0020-0>
11. Nesi, J., Choukas-Bradley, S., & Prinstein, M. J. (2018). Transformation of adolescent peer relations in the social media context. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(11), 2043-2055. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000510>
12. Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2014). The development of self-esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(5), 381-387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721414547414>
13. Primack, B. A., Shensa, A., Sidani, J. E., Whaite, E. O., Lin, L. Y., Rosen, D., ... Miller, E. (2017). Social media use and perceived social isolation among young adults in the U.S. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 53(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2017.01.010>
14. Riaz, S., Bano, Z., Abbas, R., & Rizwan, M. (2018). Dilemmas of adolescents: Dark triad and relational aggression, moderated by economic status. *Review of Economics and Development Studies (READS)*, 4(2), 209-218.
15. Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
16. Shabbir, S. W., Malik, N., Batool, Z., Bashir, M. O., & Rizwan, M. (2021). Ethical Issues and Challenges for the eradication of Polio in Pakistan. *Annals of Social Sciences and Perspective*, 2(1), 51-58.
17. Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N. (2018). Increases in depressive symptoms and suicide-related outcomes among adolescents after 2010 and links to increased new media screen time. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 6(1), 3-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702617723376>
18. Valkenburg, P. M., Beyens, I., Pouwels, J. L., van Driel, I. I., & Keijsers, L. (2017). Social media use and adolescents' self-esteem: Heading for a person-specific media effects paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 67(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12279>
19. Verduyn, P., Ybarra, O., Résibois, M., Jonides, J., & Kross, E. (2017). Do social network sites enhance or undermine subjective well-being? A critical review. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 11(1), 274-302. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12033>
20. Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206-222. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000047>
21. World Health Organization. (2022). Mental health: Strengthening our response. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>



2025 by the authors; Journal of Global Social Transformation (JGST). This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).