

Exploring the associations between Social Media Addiction, Media Pressure, Self-esteem and Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation among young adults.

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ABSTRACT

We are now in an era that endorses unrealistic standards of beauty and accomplishments, this is amplified through pressures from different forms of media be it television, magazines and the internet. Increased Social media usage seems to be having a negative impact on individuals who read the feed reels, try to post only the desirable moments while masking efforts, struggles and the everyday aspects of day to day life. There is also a tendency to constantly seek more validation through likes and comments. This may in turn affect their sense of self. The social illusion that is created by their profiles and shares by others may also make them compare themselves with others, distorting the person from the reality of life. Thus, the study examined the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem and fear of negative appearance evaluation among young adults. The study also investigated if there were any gender differences in social media addiction, Self-esteem and Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale among young adults. The sample consisted of 100 young adults from Chennai City. The study was ex post-facto in nature and convenient sampling technique was used. The age range of the sample was from 18 to 25 years. Study procedures included the administration of the following measures (1) Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al, 2012) (2) The Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale (FNAES; Thomas et al., 1998) (3) Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) (4) Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (SATAQ-4, Pressures -Media subscale Thompson et.al, 2011). Pearson's Correlation coefficient and independent samples't' test were computed to test the hypotheses. Results are discussed in the light of the findings of the study.

Keywords: Social media addiction, Self-esteem, Media pressure, Fear of negative appearance evaluation, Young adults.

INTRODUCTION:

Social media has become an integral part of everyday life. The myriad uses of social media range from posting photos to sharing information' on multiple platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Pinterest etc. It also gives people the opportunity to present themselves impressively and thus can become addictive causing inclination to use more and more. On one hand, though social media acts a mediator to establish and maintain relationships, to communicate and share media content, it may influence the individual's perception about themselves, leading to feelings of inadequacy, apprehensions and preoccupations about perceived body imperfections.

The rise in social media use has also led to the need to fit in by being popular and to outdo others. Social Networking Sites differ from traditional forms of media by their immediacy, interactive, active participation, and circle of connectedness (Sara Santarossa, 2015, Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). Users who spend most of their time posting, commenting on and comparing themselves to photographs are the ones who are more vulnerable to seek approval from others and compare their body with others.

Perception about one's own body has been an imperative psychological well-being issue particularly for youthful grown-ups, on the grounds that it incorporates both how they see themselves and how they feel about what they see. Appearance evaluation is another important facet during young adulthood closely related to body image. For adolescents, appearance becomes central as they attempt to develop a unique style or try to "fit in" according to societal norms or with the peer group in which they identify (Leslie Rene Merritt, 2004 & American Psychological Association, 2002). Continuous criticism of self and comparing appearance with others can easily spin out of control. There is also a tendency to constantly seek more validation through likes and comments.

Self-esteem is vital because it defines how comfortable a person is in their own skin, and if someone is not comfortable in their own skin, it could lead to serious issues. According to the Sociocultural Model, different

forms of media such as print and digital media, peers, and family are important vehicles through which messages about weight and appearance are transmitted to members of society. (Santarossa, 2015). Social networking sites merge media, peers, and family influence to convey societal standards and virtually support the beauty ideals and, in turn, encourage body dissatisfaction (Santarossa, 2015). By making comparisons to others such as family members, peers, and media images, these perceptions are reinforced (Merritt, 2004). This may create a subjected feeling of pressure among young adults to compete in this online world which they may also lead to exhibiting fear of negative appearance evaluation. It was found in a study that repeated exposure to these idolized physiques leads us to believe that lean, toned bodies are normal, attainable, expected and central to attractiveness with an end result: overwhelming dissatisfaction with one's own body (Nancy Clark, 2017, Grabe et al. 2016). Thus, the psycho-social wellbeing of the individual is affected. This is especially evident among adolescents and young adults and it affects every domain of life.

Objectives of the study

- 1.To assess the level of social media addiction, fear of negative appearance evaluation, self-esteem and media pressure among young adults.
2. To examine if there were gender difference in social media addiction, fear of negative appearance evaluation, self-esteem and media pressure among young adults
3. To investigate the relationship between social media addiction, fear of negative appearance, self-esteem and media pressure evaluation among young adults

Research design

The Research design was Ex post facto research.

Sample

The sample consisted of 100 young adults between the age group of 18-25 years of age. Snowball sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Tools used

The Bergen Social Media Addiction scale (BSMAS; Andreassen et al, 2012)

It is an adaptation of the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS; Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg&Pallesen 2012). It consists of 6 items each item is answered on a 5-point likert scale ranging from very rarely (1) to very often (5). It yields a composite score from 6 to 30. The BSMAS involves replacing the word Facebook with Social media only, and the social media being defined as “Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the like”, in the instructions to the participants. Internal consistency of the BSMAS was Cronbach's alpha = .88

Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation Scale (FNAES; Lundgren et.al, 2004)

The FNAES was developed by Lundgren et.al. The questionnaire contained 6 questions. Scores on each question ranged from 1 to 5 (1 = Not at all, 5 = Extremely). All items used negative declarative sentences, with higher scores representing higher the fear of negative appearance evaluation. The internal consistency was high (.94), as well as the item–item correlations.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965)

The RSES is a widely used, 10-item self-report measure, used to measure global trait SE (Rosenberg, 1965, 1979). Items are measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree), with reverse scoring for appropriate items. Items are then summed to give a total score out of 40, with higher scores indicating higher global trait SE. A sample item is “I take a positive attitude toward myself”.

Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (SATAQ-4, Pressures -Media subscale Thompson et.al, 2011)

Pressures – Media: It is a 4 item subscale which measures pressures from media such as television, magazines, the Internet, movies, billboards, and advertisements. Items are rated on a five point scale ranging from 1 (Definitely Disagree) to 5 (Definitely Agree) with higher the scores, higher the pressure from media.

Statistics used

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationships between variables and independent samples t-test was used to examine gender differences in the four variables.

Results and discussion

Table 1. Relationship between social media addiction and fear of negative appearance evaluation in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Social media addiction	0.305 **
Fear of negative appearance evaluation	

** Significant at 0.01 level

The correlation coefficient is significant indicating a positive relationship between social media addiction and fear of negative appearance evaluation in young adults. The positive relationship indicates that with an increase in social media addiction, the fear of negative appearance evaluation increases in young adults. This research is supported by the research conducted by Fardouly and Vartanian (2015) who reported that the relationship between Facebook usage and Body image concerns is specifically mediated by appearance comparisons in general (i.e., their tendency to compare their own appearance to others on Facebook).

Table 2. Relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Social media addiction	- 0.084 ^{NS}
Self-esteem	

NS - Not significant

The correlation coefficient is not significant indicating no relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem among young adults. This indicates that there is no link between social media addiction and self-esteem among young adults. This is contradictory to the study done by Nazir et.al (2015) who reported that higher the social media addiction, lower the level of self-esteem among university students.

Table 3. Relationship between social media addiction and media pressure in young adults

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Social media addiction	0.237 *
Media pressure	

* Significant at 0.05 level

The correlation coefficient is significant indicating a positive relationship between social media addiction and media pressure in young adults. The positive relationship indicates that as social media addiction increases, the media pressure to look better is high in young adults. This research is supported by a research done by Mooney, Farley & Strugnell (2009) who found that lifestyle of celebrities and play a central and inspirational role for the majority of young females, where social media acts as an outlet for users to follow their favourite celebrities, reading personal and detailed posts about not only their lives but their diets, exercise habits, and/or beauty beliefs.

Table 4. Relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and self-esteem in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Fear of negative appearance evaluation	- 0.097 ^{NS}
Self-esteem	

NS - Not significant

The correlation coefficient is not significant indicating no relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and self-esteem among young adults. This indicates that there is no link between fear of negative appearance evaluation and self-esteem among young adults.

Table 5. Relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and media pressure in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Fear of negative appearance evaluation	0.599 **
Media pressure	

** Significant at 0.01 level

The correlation coefficient is significant indicating a positive relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and media pressure in young adults. From this positive relationship it can be inferred that as media pressure to look better increases, young adults experience a greater fear of negative appearance evaluation. This research is supported by Botta (2000) found that media images have the potential to cause both an indirect-the thin body ideal-and a direct-body image disturbance-effect.

Table 6. Relationship between media pressure and self-esteem in young adults.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient
Media pressure	0.030 ^{NS}
Self-esteem	

NS – Not significant

The correlation coefficient is not significant indicating a no relationship between media pressure and self-esteem in young adults. This indicates that there is no link between increase in media pressure to look better and self-esteem in young adults.

Table 7. Mean, standard deviation, 't' value (CR) and level of significance on social media addiction, fear of negative appearance evaluation, media pressure and self-esteem in male and female adults.

Variable	Nature of Sample	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	C.R. Value
Social Media Addiction	Male	53	17.18	4.58	0.321 ^{NS}
	Female	53	17.49	5.08	
Fear of Negative Appearance Evaluation	Male	53	16.54	7.72	0.242 ^{NS}
	Female	53	16.88	6.69	
Self-Esteem	Male	53	18.83	6.22	0.291 ^{NS}
	Female	53	19.18	6.47	
Media pressure	Male	53	10.37	4.60	0.105 ^{NS}
	Female	53	10.47	4.60	

NS – Not significant

The table 7 shows social media addiction, fear of negative appearance evaluation, self-esteem and media pressure between male and female adults. There are no significant gender differences in social media addiction, fear of negative appearance evaluation, self-esteem and media pressure between male and female young adults.

Conclusion

- There is a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and fear of negative appearance evaluation among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem in young adults.
- Significant positive relationship exists between social media addiction and media pressure among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and self-esteem among young adults.
- A significant positive relationship between fear of negative appearance evaluation and media pressure among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between media pressure and self-esteem among young adults.
- There is no significant difference in social media addiction with respect to gender.

- There is no significant difference in fear of negative appearance evaluation between male and female young adults.
- There is no significant difference self-esteem between male and female young adults.
- There is no significant difference media pressure with respect to gender.

Implications

Findings of the study are disconcerting, and indicate a greater need for education, research and awareness on the effects of social media especially on young adults particularly in terms of appearance evaluation. It is not just family members or peers that influence individuals to negatively evaluate their appearance and instil fear; but it seems that social networking sites and pressure from media which show ads, photos etc. that individuals are exposed to seem to have negative effects on body image. Psychoeducation on how to use media judiciously and not to be influenced or pressured by media can be suggested. Adolescents can also be given some training programs on how to develop a healthy body image and self-esteem.

Limitations

1. The research was done with only 100 young adults.
2. The geographical area was restricted to the state capital- Chennai.

Suggestions for further research

1. A larger sample could have been used.
2. Other psychological variables related to social media addiction can be investigated.

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