

Social media and self-esteem



Social Media and Self-Esteem

Social Media has evolved into something bigger than itself and today it may do more harm than help. Does social media have an impact on people's self-esteem today? The usage of social media has grown immensely over the past decade and a half with LinkedIn being released in 2003, Facebook in February of 2004, Twitter in March of 2006, Instagram in October of 2010, and Pinterest in January of 2010. As of March 2016, and on average Facebook had more than 1.09 billion daily active users, Instagram had more than 400 million monthly active users and 80 million daily shared photos with 3.5 billion likes daily. Twitter had 310 million monthly active users, and LinkedIn had more than 433 million active users. As for gender differences, more women (68%) have been using social media compared to men (62%), and women on average spend 46 minutes per day on social media compared to 31 minutes by men. As we perceive it, social media is the compulsive use of social media sites that manifests itself in behavioral addiction symptoms. The symptoms include salience, tolerance, conflict, withdrawal, relapse, and mood modification.

Self-esteem is defined as "A confidence and satisfaction in oneself" and self-conceit which is "an exaggerated opinion of one's own qualities or abilities." Most studies that have examined the relation between self-esteem and the use of social media sites have showed that people with low self-esteem tend to use more social media sites to enhance their self-image and self-esteem. For instance, a long-term on Facebook users showed that self-esteem moderated the relation between Facebook use and social capital. Based on social compensation, which is considered a compliment of

social loafing, and refers to when individuals work harder and expend more effort in a group setting – to compensate for others – compared to working alone. People with low self-esteem, low life satisfaction, and people who have few offline contacts compensate by using Facebook to gain more friends and more popularity. Also, some studies showed a positive relationship between Instagram use and narcissism, where users high in narcissism tend to post more selfies and spend more time on Instagram. Gender differences played a role with Instagram use, as it was the best predictor of Instagram usage. A large-scale study of 23, 592 social media users from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, showed that addicted use of social media is linked to being female, high in narcissism and low in self-esteem. Most of these studies have been conducted mainly in Europe and the United States.

A recent study on 24 emerging countries, including Lebanon, released by the Pew Research Center, reported that 72% of Internet users in Lebanon use social media sites, compared to 73% in the United States. This study also reported that 100% of Lebanese users use social media sites to stay in touch with family and friends. The purpose of this study was to check whether the relation between addictive use of social media and self-esteem exists in just the sample from Europe and the United States or if is in other areas as well.

Many studies showed that technology addictions, including internet and social networking sites, had positive association with anxiety, depression, and stress, but had negative association with academic performance, all of which negatively affects satisfaction with life. A recent study of a sample of 381 Polish Facebook users, Facebook addicts had lower self-esteem and

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satisfaction with life than their nonaddict counterparts. This finding was like a sample of 82 Americans with the middle age being 19 and a half years old, the more participants that used Facebook, the more their well-being and satisfaction with life declined. Another study that supported these claims was a study on 311 Turkish undergraduate students in which satisfaction with life was negatively associated with problematic Facebook use. A German study of 583 Facebook users showed that people who passively follow online users experience social comparison and feelings of envy, which decreases satisfaction with life. Another study found that people who have used Facebook for a long time and who check it more often believe that other people are happier than they are, life is unfair, and that others have a better life. (SAGE)

As most people know, Facebook and many other social networking sites allow users to “ like” a post that someone has created as a way to show that they enjoyed the post. The simplicity of liking someone’s post has been made very popular over the past few years, so much so that some people are affected by the number of “ likes” their post gets. When Facebook first launched in February of 2004, there was no ‘ like’ button. The ‘ like’ button was implemented a whole five years later by Justin Rosenstein who worked for Facebook at the time. Even though he is the one who started the trend to have a ‘ like’ system on social media and other sites, he does not have Snapchat, or Reddit, and restricts himself on Facebook because he fears the possible psychological effects that it has on him.

The ‘ like’ button that sits in the bottom corner of each post has had a strong influence on the temperament on some people if they are obsessed with

social media. If someone gets few likes on a post they may feel like nobody cares about them, and they are not popular, but if they were to get lots of likes, they will be delighted and be on cloud nine for the whole day.

Facebook is the most popular social media site with nearly 4.5 billion likes generated daily, and half of all users liking at least one post they view every day. What impact does the getting 'likes' have on the people receiving them? Evidence suggests a positive influence that getting 'likes' on posts posted online matches positively with self-esteem. On the other hand, having to rely on getting 'likes' from other people on the internet to feel good about oneself may signal unintentional self-worth, which can undermine a person's well-being over time. (LIKES)

The paper has covered social media and how it effects self-esteem from 'likes' and addiction, but the most prevalent issue in with people's self-esteem and how it is effected with social media sites like Instagram and Facebook is the way the media dictates how men and women should look. Images on social media of the ideal body can have an overwhelming negative influence on both men and women. One example is when given a magazine or shown websites featuring thin women, women tend to have a greater negative feeling towards their bodies including increasing drive for being thin, and lower self-esteem. Also, women with greater overall media presence and exposure report lower levels of social competence and a higher dissatisfaction with their appearance. This is not surprising however, due to the fact that most magazines that are directed towards women are about losing weight and dieting. A quick search on the internet showed that out of the first 30 magazines that showed up on a magazine selling site, 15

of the covers had something to do with weight loss from working out, models, and weight loss from dieting. Not one of those magazines showed a picture of what most people would consider a bigger person.

A professional study was done for content analysis of women's magazines, 40% of dominant headlines included objectifying phrases. Objectifying media has been shown to have numerous negative effects on both men and women, including body dissatisfaction, thinking about how the body looks, and how the body looks. On top of all this, female magazine models are generally getting thinner than the average American woman, which pressures women to try to achieve a body image which may not be safe or feasible for them. With women being pressured by the media to be thin, it puts pressure on men to be strong, lean, and toned. While women magazines show slim and tone women, men's magazines show muscular men. This can cause eating disorders, and a greater dissatisfaction with their body. Men also report lower body esteem, lower self-esteem, view their body as less attractive, and experience greater concern regarding fitness, weight and muscularity following exposure to pictures of muscular men. A big problem seems to come when those who are easily impressionable to media images, view those images and then internalize them. (Relationships)

The act of taking and sharing selfies has become huge in everyday life, and the effects have not been talked about much in the daily media. A study was done to see the effect of the selfie on people who took and shared their selfies. Based on the social comparison theory, the study focused on two psychological factors: social sensitivity and self-esteem. Social Comparison Theory is when individuals determine their own social and personal worth

based on how they feel they stack up against others. In the experiment, they manipulated the context of experiencing selfies. The participants were asked to take a picture of a self-portrait, or a cup, using their own smartphone. Then they were instructed to either post it on a social media site or save it to their camera roll. The participants' social sensitivity was assessed by measuring their reaction time to a social probe, and self-esteem was evaluated by measuring the size of their signatures. The study found that the participants reaction time to a social probe decreased and the size of their signature decreased after they took and shared a selfie. These results suggested that taking and sharing selfies could result in a greater social sensitivity and lower self-esteem of selfie takers.

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