

Psychological Distress and Impulsiveness among Social Media Addicts

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In this modern world, social networking websites have improved communication, but it has also sparked concerns about potential negative effects on mental health. This study investigates the connection between impulsivity, psychological suffering, and social site compulsion among users. This investigation includes a sample of 50 social media users and 50 nonsocial media users from Maharshi Dayanand University age range between 18 to 30 answered questionnaires measuring their degrees of impulsivity, psychological discomfort (including anxiety and depression symptoms), and social media addiction. The findings show a strong there is a substantial positive link between psychological discomfort and social site addiction, indicating that higher levels of addiction are linked to more severe feelings of sadness and anxiety. Additionally, it was discovered that impulsivity mediated this association, suggesting that impulsive actions could make social media addicts feel more psychologically distressed. These results highlight the intricate relationship that exists between impulsive behavior, psychological health, and social media use. Developing focused interventions to lessen the negative impacts of social website dependency on mental well-being requires an understanding of these processes. The necessity for psychoeducation on social media responsibility and the creation of techniques to improve users' impulse control are two practical ramifications. Future studies should examine moderating factors, including age, gender, and length of social media use, in addition to delving deeper into the precise pathways via which social media addiction affects psychological distress and impulsivity. Researchers and practitioners can help develop better-informed methods for promoting mental health in the digital era by addressing these challenges.

Keywords: impulsivity, psychological distress, addiction to social media, non-addiction to social media

World Health Organization (WHO) define mental health “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to overcome obstacles.” The WHO defines mental well-being as “more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.” In addition to resolving present problems, sustaining ongoing wellness and happiness is necessary to reach optimal mental health. It also emphasizes how critical it is to preserve and enhance mental health on an individual, societal, and collective basis. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports

that around one in five US adults have mental health problems each year. In 2020, 14.2 million adults in the United States were predicted to be affected by a significant psychological disorder, or around 5.6% of the population.

It has long been recognized that psychological anguish is a real reality. The Book of Job, for instance, is a famous illustration of psychological distress. Job is thought to have been in extreme distress; he stopped enjoying activities he had enjoyed, lost hope, withdrew, started self-blaming and self-deprecating, and had trouble sleeping.

An Egyptian text from 3,900 years ago, according to Kovacs and Beck (1978), presents a stunningly realistic picture of the sufferer's pessimism, lack of faith in others, incompetence to perform daily tasks, and significant suicidal thoughts. These historical narratives align with specific current theories of the phenomenon of mental anguish and emotional pain associated with difficult-to-manage obligations and stressors in daily life. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), psychological distress is defined as "an undifferentiated group of symptoms ranging from anxiety and depression symptoms to functional impairment, personality traits (confusing, troubling), and behavioral problems."

American Psychological Association (APA) [5] psychological anguish is described as "a set of painful mental and physical symptoms that are associated with normal fluctuations of mood in most people"

To agreeing later investigate, 15% of Australians (16–85) report having had greatly tall levels of mental anguish. Ladies involvement mental trouble at a higher rate than guys do. More youthful Australians have higher levels of mental anguish than more seasoned Australians do. In this exceedingly competitive age, individuals are incapable to oversee their enthusiastic anguish in any perspective of their lives. And since of this mental inconvenience, individuals too encounter different mental disarranges that have a serious negative affect on their lives and their physical wellbeing. As a result, mental trouble has a comprehensive negative affect on people's mental wellbeing. There is a part of dissatisfaction, push, and due dates in every day life as a result of modernization, globalization, and stationary ways of life. Mental trouble plays a imperative part in mental wellbeing. Mental trouble can be caused by social, mental and enthusiastic

circumstances which are not exceptionally simple to handle. In specific, inhabitants of the stress-distress show set that the characterizing highlights of mental trouble are presentation of a unpleasant occasion which undermines the mental or physical wellbeing, the inability to deal with this stressor in a sustainable way and the ensuing intense unrest that results from this ineffective adaptation (Horwitz 2007, Ridner 2004). Stress is one aspect of mental health issues.

According to Selye " Stress is the non specific response of the body to any demand for change." According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), "psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 19). Stress can be caused by a variety of things, such as having a large number of Facebook friends, feeling envious of their well-preserved lives, having to reply to texts right away, getting lost in the gorgeous pictures of crafts on Pinterest, having to follow status updates on Twitter, and having "fear of missing out" on events in friends' and family's lives. Research revealed a high level of psychological distress among students, with those who were less or did not use social networking sites more likely to experience this. Research indicates that a high degree of addiction to digital sites may especially guard against the increased risk of anxiety and despair. (Asibong, Udeme; Okafor, Chidi John et al. 2020)

Impulsivity is another psychological variable that is being examined in this study. Impulsivity is an unreasonable conduct that happens without the person's awareness of the risks and repercussions of the action. Eysenck defined impulsivity as "characterized by unplanned risky behaviors, and making up one's mind quickly." According

to Dickman “dysfunctional impulsivity is characterized by taking action with less thought in comparison to most individuals with the same level of skill and knowledge.” Nigg et al. defined impulsivity as “a rash response in situations where considerate response is more appropriate.”

Three things, according to Patton et al., influence impulsivity:

- a) spontaneous action (motor activation)
- b) lack of attention to the work at hand (inattentiveness)
- c) careless planning and thought (non-planning)

According to Mustafa Savci, Ferda Aysan (2016) Ferda Aysan found a direct and there is an indirect relationship between social media use, loneliness, and impulsivity. Problematic social media use has been linked to higher levels of general and specific impulsivity, according to eight research. . Social media refers to a wide range of websites, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and others. While some people are more dependent on one social media site than another, the issues faced by addicts to all social media sites are similar. For example, a study indicated that those with Facebook addictions can be more impulsive than people without the addiction. These findings would suggest that impulsivity is a fundamental trait shared by Facebook addiction and with other kinds of addiction (Daniel Delaney, LAR Stein, Russell Gruber, 2018).The current study investigated the connections between a preference for “forced” decisions and social media dependency, as well as these connections to anxiety, intolerance of ambiguity, and experience avoidance. In this study 151 willing individuals, ages 18 to 32, who made up the sample. They also completed a behavioral examination using a paradigm

designed for pigeons, where they had to choose between two scenarios: one with a forced decision and another with a free choice of options. The link between anxiety and social media reliance was mediated by intolerance for uncertainty. Furthermore, people who were less dependent on social networking site liked having the option to select the contingency they worked on, whereas In research, although it has been discussed that social media and the rise in smartphone use may be having an impact on youth and driving up the prevalence of internet addiction, our research indicates that impulsivity plays a significant role in online addiction, just as it does in other forms of addiction. Addiction to social media is impacting people’s lives and mental health everywhere. People are always on their phones. They are constantly glued to their phones, spending the majority of their waking hours on social media. Their mental health is determined by their subscribers, likes, and following. People are using social media more and more, which is contributing to an increase in mental health issues like anxiety, depression, impulsivity, and psychological distress. This is starting to pose a serious risk to the society and needs to be studied (Reed & Haas, 2023).

Objective:

- To investigate the variations between social media addicts and non-addicts in terms of psychological distress and impulsivity.

Hypotheses:

- The level of impulsiveness would be significantly different among students social media addicted and non addicted
- The level of impulsiveness would be significant among social media-addicted and non-addicted

Method

Research Design

For this investigation, a two-group design was adopted. Fifty social media addicts made up Group 1, and fifty average students made up Group II.

Sample

A sample of 100 students was taken, 50 of them were classified as social media addicts discovered on the basis of their score on the social media addiction scale, and the remaining 50 were considered normal students without any kind of social media addiction. The Maharishi Dayanand University campus provided the sample. The subjects ranged in age from eighteen to thirty. Both male and female respondents made up the sample. When it came to sociodemographic factors, the subjects in the two groups were as equal as possible.

Instruments

Psychological distress-the Kessler Psychological Discomfort Scale (K10) [1] is a basic instrument used to gauge psychological distress. The K10 scale evaluates emotional states using ten items, each with five response options. The assessment could be used as a quick screening tool to determine how uncomfortable someone is. Patients have two options: the instrument to fill out or the clinician to read the questions aloud to them.

Impulsiveness: Impulsiveness scale by S.N. Rai and Dr. Alka Sharma. It contains 30 items and measure impulsive tendency of the adolescents. This test can be administered in individual and small group condition. There is no time limit but normally take 30 minutes to answer all items of the scale. The response indicating impulsiveness scale is scored as 1 and response indicating no impulsiveness is scored as 0. Scores obtained for each item are summed to get a

total score. The scores we calculated from impulsiveness scale between 0 to 30. The validity of scale found to be .58. The reliability co-efficient obtained was .72.

Procedure

First participants were told that the purpose of the research was to build appropriate rapport with them. The instructions for each scale were provided separately once the participants' consent and demographic data were collected. The Beck depression inventory and the perceived stress scale were then given one at a time. The questionnaires were returned once they had been completed, and the participants were thanked for their participation. According to the relevant manuals, the scoring was completed. The t-test was utilized in the data analysis process.

Results

Comparing the psychological distress and impulsivity levels of social media addicts and non-addicts was the aim of this study. The t-test is being used to calculate the significance of the difference between the two groups' mean scores. Table 1 shows the perceived stress standard deviation, t - value, and mean score.

Table 1. Means, SDs, and t -value of social media addicted and non-addicted Groups on the Psychological distress (N=100)

Variable	Social media Addicted		Non-Addicted		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Psychological Distress	19.22	4.63	16.82	4.19	2.71**

Note: ** Significant 0.01 level

The mean score of Group I was 19.22(SD=4.63) and group II was 16.82(SD=4.19) which was found to be 2.71 and significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that social media addictive person have significantly higher

degree of psychological distress as compare to non social media addictive students; therefore, first hypothesis is verified. Students who are dependent on social media have greater access to psychological discomfort, indicating that their anguish levels are elevated. This can result in anxiety, depression, and other mental health illnesses, ultimately leading to an unhealthy mental state. However, the mean of their counterparts—those who do not abuse social media—is lower, indicating a lower level of anguish, anxiety, sadness, and mental illnesses. Figure 1 illustrates the frequently seen graphical representation.

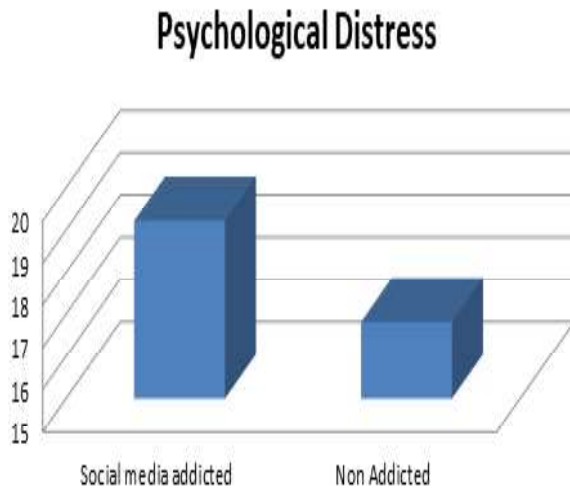


Figure 1.

The results validate earlier studies. Rajeh, Aboalshamat, Mahmoud, Badawoud, Muhammad, Alzhrani, Matooq, and Badri (2023) proposed a direct correlation between participants' psychological distress scores and social media addiction. A study by Huang, Latner, Brien, Hung, Chen, Lee, and Lin (2023) shown a direct correlation between food addiction and social media addiction, with psychological distress playing a role. According to Kreya and Wok's 2020 research, students should cut back on their usage of social media and limit their time on it in order to prevent mental health problems like anxiety, depression, and difficulty

concentrating. Henzel and Håkansson (2021) state that. Younger teenagers are the most affected by the correlation between high levels of psychological discomfort and heavy social media use, according to Mougharbel, Chaput, Kanyinga, Hamilton, Colman, Leatherdale, and Goldfield (2023).

The second hypothesis of the present study stated that" The level of impulsiveness would be significantly different. The present study's second hypothesis proposed that there would be a significant difference in the level of impulsiveness among social media addicts and normal students. The mean scores, standard deviations and t value of impulsiveness are depicted in Figure 2.

Table 2. SD, mean, and t- t-value of social media addicts, non addicts on impulsiveness (N=100)

Variable	Social media Addicted		Non-Addicted		t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Depression	8.44	4.42	5.64	4.62	3.09**

The mean score of social media addicts on impulsiveness was found to be 8.44(SD=4.42) and it was, 5.64 for non addicts. At the 0.01 level, the t-value (3.09) was determined to be significant. The second hypothesis is verified by present results. These results have been graphically depicted in Figure 2.

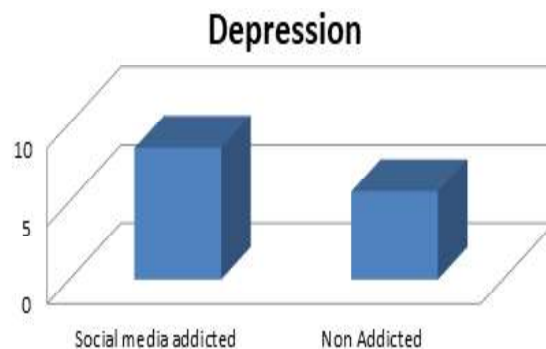


Figure 2

An individual with a greater mean of impulsiveness is often hot-headed, prone to reckless decisions, unpredictable, and unstable. The student who are not found addicted to social media are not affected by these tendencies. They are more at ease. Impulsivity becomes a major issue for addicts. According to SAVCI and AYSAN (2016), social media use has a positive relationship with impulsivity, while loneliness has a good relationship with social media usage. Put another way, one has more impulsive symptoms the more time they spend on social media, and the more time they spend on social media, they become lonely one becomes. As impulsivity rises, loneliness consequently rises as well.

According to TUTAL, ERENDOY, Melek, and Dergisi's (2021) research social media addiction was significantly more common among females, lonely, recent graduated bachelors, the people which invest much than eight hours on social networking site and users of Instagram and twitter. The virtual tolerance and virtual communication sub-dimensions of social media addiction were found to be positively and significantly related to all sub-dimensions of impulsivity and psychological symptoms when the relationship between problematic social media use, impulsivity, and psychological symptoms was investigated. According to Yýlbap and Karadeniz, the study's findings indicated that evening types were more likely than other chronotypes to be addicted to social media, smartphones, and the internet. The increased impulsivity and concentration issues shown in the evening types may be making these people very likely to become social media addicted, smartphones, and the internet. According to research by Shakya, Chauhan, Sharma, Saraswat, Rure, Singh, and Shrivastava (2023), there is a substantial link between BIS and SAS, indicating that one of the risk

factors for smartphone users acquiring an addiction is having a high trait impulsivity.

Discussion

According to this study, most students who are addicted to social media also exhibit significant levels of impulsivity and psychological discomfort. This study supports the findings of Kawa and Shafi (2015) who found that most students with social media addiction have significant levels of psychological discomfort and impulsivity. This may be explained by the thoughtless attitude and lack of awareness among students about the responsible use of social networking site. Researcher discover a favorable association between addiction to social media and despair, fear and Nervousness and stress. The findings of Daniel and Eljo's (2023) showed that teenage school children who are addicted to social media experience more stress, anxiety, and sadness. This could be because social media addiction causes withdrawal and these mental problems are brought on by the demand for more likes and follows. According to the research, teenagers who struggle with anxiety, attention-seeking, and problematic social media use may be more likely to overshare personal information online. Additional findings from Shabahang and Shim (2022) study revealed that boys tended to overshare far more on social networks than did females. Elevated degree of Online information sharing too much has been strongly linked to anxiety, attention-seeking, and social media addiction.

Conclusion

This study concludes that impulsivity, psychological suffering, and digital networking site addiction is correlated significantly. Results highlight unfavourable consequences related with excessive social networking sites use upon individual's mental well being especially in terms of heightened impulsivity and distress. In order to address

these problems, multimodal interventions are needed. These interventions should include both social initiatives to encourage healthier digital habits and individual tactics like self-regulation and mindfulness. In order to fully comprehend these connections and create preventative and intervention plans that are specifically designed to lessen the negative effect of social media addiction on mental well being, more study is needed.

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