

**EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION ON SELF-ESTEEM, AGGRESSION,  
IMPULSIVENESS AMONG LATE ADOLESCENTS****Snehal N. Gaikwad<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

This study explored how social media addiction influences self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness among late adolescents. A sample of 308 individuals aged 15 to 18 years was recruited through convenience sampling. Data were gathered using established psychological instruments: the Social Media Addiction Scale–Student Form (SMAS-SF), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), and Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11). Statistical analysis was performed in SPSS using descriptive measures and Pearson’s correlation.

Findings revealed that social media addiction was negatively associated with self-esteem, while showing positive correlations with aggression and impulsiveness. In other words, adolescents with excessive social media use tended to report lower self-confidence alongside heightened aggressive and impulsive tendencies. These results underscore the psychological consequences of social media addiction and highlight the need to encourage balanced and mindful usage among late adolescents.

**Keywords:**

Social Media Addiction, Self-Esteem, Aggression, Impulsiveness, Late Adolescents

**Funding Statement:**

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**Ethical Compliance:**

All research activities involving human participants were conducted following the ethical standards laid down by the University Grants Commission (UGC), India, the regulations of Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, and the protocols approved by the institutional research committee.

**Conflict of Interest Declaration:**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research work.



**Author Contributions:** SNG and SBW both contributed to the study's design and implementation. SNG prepared the manuscript, while SBW conducted the data analysis. SBW also supervised the project and conceptualized the original idea.

### Introduction

With the rapid rise of social networking platforms, social media addiction has become a growing concern among adolescents. Andreassen (2015) defines this addiction as a behavioral condition marked by excessive preoccupation with social media, an uncontrollable urge to engage with it, and the allocation of significant time and energy to online activity at the expense of other important aspects of life. Self-esteem, as described by Rosenberg (1965), reflects an individual's overall sense of self-worth. Aggression, according to Buss and Perry (1992), describe aggression as behavior aimed at another person with the immediate intention of causing harm. Barratt (1959) explains impulsivity as a tendency toward swift, unplanned reactions to internal or external stimuli, often disregarding potential negative consequences.

Late adolescence represents a critical developmental phase characterized by emotional shifts, identity exploration, and increasing autonomy. During this stage, adolescents are particularly susceptible to the influence of social media and online interactions. Excessive engagement can foster social comparison, online disputes, and reliance on instant gratification, which may undermine self-esteem and contribute to heightened aggression and impulsivity. Understanding how social media addiction affects these psychological dimensions is essential for fostering healthier emotional and behavioral growth in late adolescents.

### Relevance of the Study

This study seeks to examine the impact of social media addiction on self-esteem, aggression, and impulsivity among late adolescents. The insights gained may assist parents, educators, psychologists, and counselors in developing strategies to curb excessive social media use and encourage positive emotional and behavioral development. Furthermore, the research adds to the existing body of knowledge by emphasizing the link between social media addiction and key psychological factors, thereby supporting the creation of awareness initiatives and guiding future studies on late adolescent mental health.

### Objectives

1. To study the effect of social media addiction on self-esteem among late adolescents.
2. To examine the relationship between social media addiction and aggression in late adolescents.
3. To examine the relationship between social media addiction and impulsiveness in late adolescents.

### Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant negative effect of social media addiction on self-esteem among late adolescents.



2. There will be a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and aggression among late adolescents.
3. There will be a significant positive relationship between social media addiction and impulsiveness among late adolescents.

### Method

#### Participants:

The study sample comprised 308 adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age. Participants were drawn from various schools using a convenience sampling technique, and both male and female students were included.

#### Measure:

**Social Media Addiction Scale–Student Form (SMAS-SF)** The Social Media Addiction Scale–Student Form (SMAS-SF), created by Sahin in 2018, is designed to evaluate social media addiction among adolescents. Grounded in the behavioral addiction framework, it assesses excessive and compulsive social media use that can disrupt daily routines, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. The instrument consists of 29 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The SMAS-SF captures five dimensions of social media addiction: preoccupation, mood modification, relapse, conflict, and withdrawal. These dimensions provide insight into problematic usage patterns and behavioral tendencies. Prior research has established the scale's strong reliability and validity, making it a widely accepted tool for assessing social media addiction in adolescent populations.

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, is a widely recognized instrument for assessing self-esteem and overall self-worth. It is among the most frequently used measures in psychological research. The scale consists of 10 items, both positively and negatively phrased, rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The RSES evaluates global self-esteem by capturing individuals' positive and negative perceptions of themselves. Negatively worded items are reverse scored before computing the total score. Extensive research has confirmed its reliability and validity across diverse populations. The scale is commonly applied to both adolescents and adults, making it a suitable tool for examining self-esteem in research contexts.

**Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ)** The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), introduced by Buss and Perry in 1992, is a widely utilized tool for assessing aggression in psychological research. It consists of 29 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from extremely uncharacteristic to extremely characteristic.

The instrument evaluates four dimensions of aggression: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. These subscales provide a comprehensive picture of aggressive tendencies and behavioral responses. Numerous studies have confirmed the BPAQ's strong reliability and validity, and it is frequently applied to both adolescent and adult populations, making it a suitable measure for research on aggression.



**Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11)** The Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11), developed by Patton, Stanford, and Barratt in 1995, is a widely used self-report instrument for assessing impulsivity as a personality trait. It comprises 30 items rated on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from rarely/never to almost always/always.

The BIS-11 evaluates three dimensions of impulsivity: attentional impulsiveness, motor impulsiveness, and non-planning impulsiveness. Together, these domains provide a detailed understanding of impulsive behavior and decision-making tendencies. Research has consistently demonstrated the scale’s reliability and validity across diverse populations. It is frequently employed with both adolescents and adults, making it a suitable tool for examining impulsivity in psychological studies.

**Procedure:**

Participants were recruited using a non-probability convenience sampling method. Prior to data collection, the objectives of the study were clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for research purposes.

The final sample included 308 adolescents aged 15 to 18 years. Data were collected through a paper-pencil administration of the questionnaires. Participants were instructed to read each item carefully and respond truthfully. Once completed, the questionnaires were gathered, coded, and organized for statistical analysis.

**Results and Discussion:**

**TABLE 1 Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Addiction, Self-Esteem, Aggression, Impulsiveness (N = 308)**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Media Addiction	308	86.83	5.32	0.201	-0.134
Self-Esteem	308	22.44	4.728	-0.419	-1.07
Aggression	308	89.78	11.985	0.408	0.172
Impulsiveness	308	92.18	13.02	0.043	0.245



The descriptive statistics for social media addiction, self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness among late adolescents (N = 308) are presented. The mean score for social media addiction was 86.83 with a standard deviation of 5.32, reflecting a moderate level of addiction among participants. The skewness value (0.201) and kurtosis value (-0.134) indicate that the distribution of scores is approximately normal.

The mean self-esteem score was 22.44 with a standard deviation of 4.728, reflecting a moderate level of self-esteem among late adolescents. The skewness value (-0.419) indicates a slight negative skew, while the kurtosis value (-1.07) points to a relatively flat distribution. Overall, this suggests that most participants reported moderate self-esteem levels.

Aggression had a mean score of 89.78 with a standard deviation of 11.985, reflecting moderate levels of aggression among participants. The skewness (0.408) and kurtosis (0.172) values indicate that the distribution is close to normal, suggesting that aggression among late adolescents was generally balanced with minor variation.

Impulsiveness recorded a mean score of 92.18 with a standard deviation of 13.02, also pointing to moderate impulsivity. The skewness (0.043) and kurtosis (0.245) values confirm that the distribution is nearly normal. Taken together, the descriptive statistics show that social media addiction, self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness among late adolescents fall within moderate ranges and are appropriately distributed for further statistical analysis.

**TABLE 2 Correlation among Social Media Addiction, Self-Esteem, Aggression, Impulsiveness (N = 308)**

Variables	Social Media Addiction	Self-Esteem	Aggression	Impulsiveness
<b>Social Media Addiction</b>	1			
<b>Self-Esteem</b>	-0.417**	1		
<b>Aggression</b>	0.593**	0.619**	1	
<b>Impulsiveness</b>	0.603**	0.589**	0.736**	1

The correlation analysis among social media addiction, self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness in late adolescents (N = 308) revealed significant associations. Social media addiction demonstrated a negative correlation with self-esteem ( $r = -0.417^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that higher levels of social media use were linked to lower self-esteem among participants.

Social media addiction was found to have a positive correlation with aggression ( $r = 0.593^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Impulsiveness ( $r = 0.603^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that greater engagement with social media is linked to higher levels of aggressive and impulsive behavior among adolescents. These results suggest that excessive social media use may play a role in



shaping both emotional and behavioral functioning in late adolescents. Self-esteem was positively correlated with aggression ( $r = 0.619^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Impulsiveness ( $r = 0.589^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Aggression also showed a strong positive correlation with impulsiveness ( $r = 0.736^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher aggression levels tend to exhibit greater impulsive behavior. Overall, the results demonstrate significant interconnections among social media addiction, self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness in late adolescents.

### Conclusions:

The results of this study demonstrate that social media addiction, self-esteem, aggression, and impulsiveness are significantly interconnected among late adolescents. Descriptive statistics revealed moderate levels of all four variables, suggesting that social media use and related psychological factors are common in this age group and can affect both emotional and behavioral functioning.

Correlation analyses showed that social media addiction was negatively associated with self-esteem, while positively linked to aggression and impulsiveness. This indicates that higher levels of social media use correspond with lower self-esteem and greater aggressive and impulsive tendencies. Moreover, aggression and impulsiveness were strongly correlated, suggesting that adolescents with higher aggression are more likely to display impulsive behaviors.

These findings hold practical importance. Interventions aimed at strengthening emotional regulation, self-control, and behavioral management may help reduce the adverse effects of social media addiction. Programs such as anger management training, behavioral regulation workshops, and emotional control sessions could support adolescents in managing their social media use, curbing impulsive decision-making, and controlling aggressive behaviors. Implementing such initiatives in educational and counseling settings may encourage healthier choices, foster adaptive behavioral patterns, and enhance overall well-being among late adolescents.

### Recommendations

1. Introduce awareness initiatives for late adolescents that highlight responsible and balanced use of social media.
2. Conduct workshops and counseling sessions designed to strengthen self-esteem and improve emotional regulation skills.
3. Encourage active parental involvement and teacher supervision to monitor and reduce excessive social media engagement.
4. Promote offline social activities, problem-solving exercises, and coping strategies to help adolescents build healthier habits.
5. Undertake future studies with larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal designs to gain deeper insights into the long-term psychological effects of social media addiction.



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