Research Paper

Correlation Between Social Networking Site Addiction and Self-Regulation Among Young Adults of Age 18-24.

Sidra Arshad[1], Subhav Sharma[1]

[1](Assistant Professor, Dept. of Occupational Therapy ,Jamia Hamdard, Delhi)
[1](Assistant Professor, Dept. of Occupational Therapy ,Jamia Hamdard, Delhi)
Corresponding Author: Sidra Arshad

ABSTRACT: *In this paper, the correlation between self-regulation and social networking site addiction is discussed. A total of 100 participants were included in the study, and data were collected using standardized scales for self-regulation and social networking site addiction. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the two variables. Characteristic scores of both self-regulation and social networking site addiction were analyzed. Obtained results proved to be in accordance with the hypothesis, showing that individuals with higher scores on the social networking site addiction scale tended to have lower levels of self-regulation. The analysis revealed a significant negative correlation, reflecting an inverse relationship between the two constructs.*

KEYWORDS: *Social media, addiction, self-regulation, emotional state, young, adults*

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to control emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in pursuit of long-term goals. It encompasses processes such as goal-setting, impulse control, self-monitoring, and delayed gratification, all of which contribute to adaptive functioning and personal well-being [1][2]. Social networking site (SNS) addiction is a behavioural pattern defined by excessive concern about social media, an insatiable need to use SNSs, and investing so much time and effort to them that it interferes with other aspects of life [3][4]. This type of addiction is becoming more common in the digital age, particularly among adolescents and young people. It shares some characteristics with other behavioural addictions, such as mood changes, salience, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse [5].

The use of social media has become an alternative way to connect with people, such as keeping in contact with friends and family, job networking, or for dating and romance. Although using social media and SNS can have benefits such as connecting with peers and decreasing loneliness (e.g., Orben, 2020), it can also have negative consequences that could ultimately manifest as a form of addiction or problematic use.[6]

For many young adults, social media has become a seamless and indispensable part of everyday life. For example, the majority of young adult users of Instagram and Snapchat say that they use the apps every day (73% and 71%, respectively) and roughly half (53%) reported using the platforms several times a day [7]. As far as asserting control over one's social media use and being able to give it up, 51% of young adults 18–24 indicated that it would be difficult to give up using social media. Not only is social media an easy and accessible form of connecting with family, friends, and colleagues, but it has many others uses. It is frequently used for romance and flirting, interacting with brands and companies, job seeking or professional networking, as well as for business purposes [8]. While Facebook is the most widely used social media platform worldwide, young adult users often report using Instagram (76%), and Snapchat (75%) the most, with TikTok (55%) following closely behind, preferring them substantially more than other social media platforms[7]. These differences in young adult social media use suggest a need for research expansion to consider the new platforms this age group are now using, including how they use social media and why they use it.

II.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 100 participants were selected through convenient sampling from the community. The research design used for the study was a correlational design. Participants included both males and females, aged between 18 to 24 years, who were active users of at least one social networking platform, who provided informed consent and were fluent in English. Exclusion criteria included individuals with diagnosed psychiatric disorders, cognitive impairments, or those undergoing psychological treatment that could affect self-regulation.

One of the Outcome measures used in the study was the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) [10] which is a widely used tool to assess individual differences in self-regulatory capacity. It evaluates the behavioural self-regulation. The questionnaire includes items rated on a Likert scale, and higher scores reflect better self-regulation abilities. Another outcome measure which was used was the Social Networking Site Addiction Test (SNS-AT) [9]. The SNS-AT is a standardized measure designed to assess addictive behavior related to social networking platforms. It examines dimensions such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Respondents rate items on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating a greater level of SNS addiction. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process. Statistical analysis was performed using Pearson correlation to assess the relationship between self-regulation and SNS addiction.
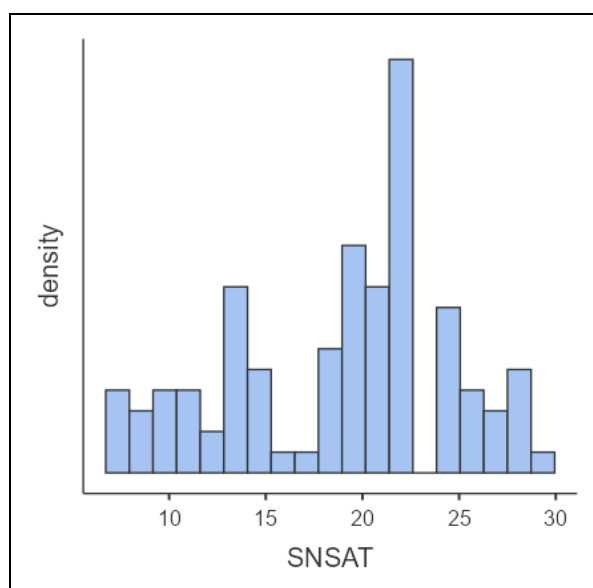
III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study comprised of a 100 participants (between the ages of 18-24) out of which 50 were male and 50 were female.

Gender
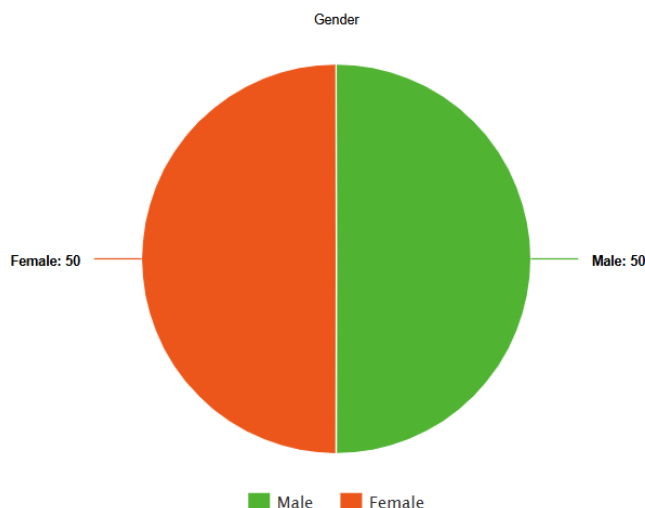
The descriptive analysis of the SNS-AT gave a mean value of 19 ± 5.75. The scores ranged between minimum values of 7 to a maximum of 29.
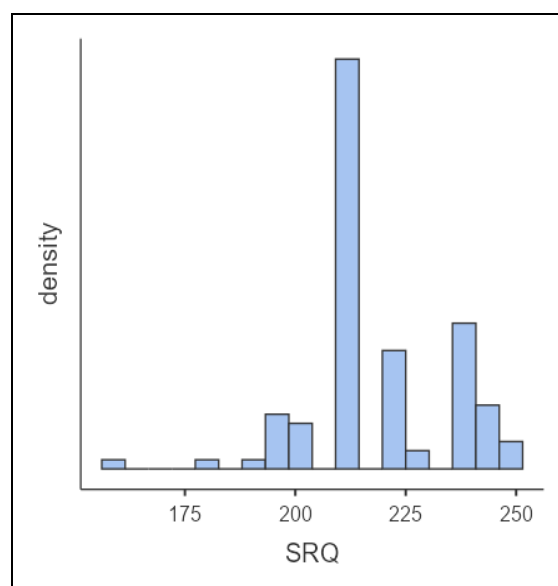
Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of SNS-AT					
	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
SNSAT	100	19.0	5.75	7	29

Graph 1: Frequency graph of SNS-AT

The descriptive analysis of the SRQ gave a mean value of 219 ± 16.20. The scores ranged between minimum values of 160 to a maximum of 250.

	N	Missing	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum
			Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of SRQ				
SRQ	100	0	219	16.2	90	160	250

Graph 2: Frequency graph of SRQ

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) calculated for SNS-AT and SRQ which was r = -0.74 and p value is less than 0.001. So correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2 tailed). This explains that SNS-AT and SRQ are inversely proportional to each other. That is if SNS-AT level increases then the SRQ decreases and have the negative correlation between the two variables as reflected in table 3 and graph 3.

		SNSAT	SRQ
		Correlation Matrix	
SRQ	Pearson's r	-0.744***	—
	df	98	—
	p-value	<.001	—

	N	100	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
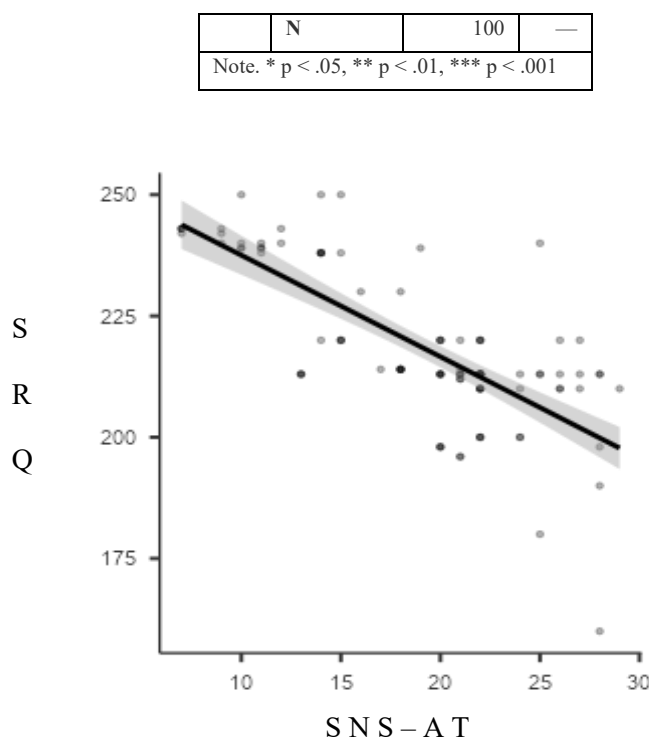
Graph- 3 Scatterplot Graph between SRQ and SNS-AT

The findings of this research indicate a significant inverse correlation ($r = -0.74$, $p < 0.001$) between addiction to social network sites (assessed by SNS-AT) and self-regulation (evaluated by the SRQ). In simpler terms, individuals more dependent on social networking platforms generally possess weaker self-regulation abilities—and this correlation is statistically significant. Consequently, the stronger someone is drawn into social media, the less probable it is that they can effectively manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Multiple studies have indicated that this type of behavior is not only prevalent but also may be detrimental. For instance, Andreassen and Pallesen (2014) [3] illustrated how addiction to social networking sites can cause disturbances in daily life—affecting sleep, work efficiency, and interpersonal relationships. Kuss and Griffiths (2015) [4] elaborated that these platforms are intentionally addictive, incorporating elements such as infinite scrolling and likes to engage users. This indicates that individuals with poor self-control are particularly at risk.

Feelings also have a significant impact. A study by Marino et al. (2020) [6] indicates that social media issues can be influenced by peer pressure and emotional factors such as loneliness or anxiety. Montag et al. (2023) [9] discovered that the fear of missing out (FoMO) is a significant emotional driver of compulsive social media checking. Once more, self-regulation is crucial—individuals who can stop, think, and make deliberate decisions are more inclined to withstand these cravings.

Finally, research conducted by Auxier and Anderson (2021) [7] and Aichner et al. (2020) [8] indicates that social media is now an integral part of everyday life, particularly for younger generations. These platforms contribute to our connection, communication, and even the way we define ourselves. However, they also complicate the process of detaching—particularly for individuals who are already having difficulty with self-regulation.

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study, 100 young adults aged 18–24 participated to explore the relationship between self-regulation and social networking site addiction. Each participant completed the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and the Social Networking Site Addiction Test (SNS-AT). The results revealed a clear negative correlation between the two variables. This means that individuals who showed higher levels of addiction to social networking sites generally had lower self-regulation abilities. On the other hand, those with stronger self-regulation skills were less likely to display signs of addictive behavior toward social media. These findings highlight the importance of developing self-regulatory capacities, especially in the context of increasing digital engagement among young adults.

REFERENCES

[1]. Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications*. New York: Guilford Press.

[2]. Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13–39). Academic Press.

[3]. Andreassen, C. S., & Pallesen, S. (2014). Social network site addiction - an overview. *Current Pharmaceutical Design*, 20(25), 4053–4061.

[4]. Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2015). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 12(3), 1286–1306.

[5]. Griffiths, M. D. (2005). A 'components' model of addiction within a biopsychosocial framework. *Journal of Substance Use*, 10(4), 191–197.

[6]. Marino C, Gini G, Angelini F, Vieno A, Spada MM. Social Norms and e-motions in Problematic Social Media Use among Adolescents. Addictive Behaviors Reports [Internet]. 2020 Jan;11:100250.

[7]. Auxier, B. and Anderson, M. (2021) Social Media use in 2021. Pew Research Center, Washington DC, 1-4.

[8]. Aichner, T., Grünfelder, M., Maurer, O., & Jegeni, D. (2020). Twenty-five years of social media: A review of social media applications and definitions from 1994 to 2019. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1089/cyber.2020.0134

[9]. Montag, C., Müller, M., Pontes, H. M., & Elhai, J. D. (2023). On fear of missing out, social networks use disorder tendencies and meaning in life. BMC Psychology, 11(1), 358. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359- 023-01342-9

[10]. Brown, J. M., Miller, W. R., & Lawendowski, L. A. (1999). The self-regulation questionnaire. In L. VandeCreek & T. L. Jackson (Eds.), Innovations in clinical practice: A source book, Vol. 17, pp. 281–292). Professional Resource Press/Professional Resource Exchange