Social Media Use and Self Esteem

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**Summary**

Human being is thought to be the Crown of Creations. What makes him unique and distinct from other living beings are his intellectual competencies—self esteem is one of them. In this paper, after deliberate painstaking analysis of a handful of preexisting literature, it will be presented that how technological advancements impact psychological factors particularly self esteem. Conclusion section will attempt to draw far-reaching inferences from the presented text.

**Introduction**

**Self esteem**

The term self esteem was coined with the full fledge focus on personal judgment about one’s own self. Three aspects of self encapsulate real self, ideal self and perceived self. Self esteem is concerned with the last aspect of self—the perceived self. It is referred to as the belief of an individual about his competencies and innate predispositions that enable him to achieve certain goals, accomplish something meaningful or overcome hardships in life using both proactive and adaptive resources (Branden, 2001). Based on his perceived views about his identity, the extent of likeness and worth that he develops about his own self is called self esteem.

Self esteem is thought to be an intellectual predisposition because it is not amenable to be altered or modified—remains constant overtime. Moreover, the nature of beliefs that individual possess about his identity are multidimensional e.g., fulfillment of basic physical needs, appearance, thinking patterns, emotions, attitudes and behaviors. It is worth noting that self esteem is appraisal dependent (Crocker & Major, 1989).

Self esteem can overtly be measured through ability to express needs effectively and accept strengths and weaknesses with timely retrospection, remain less affected by negative experiences, confidence, ability to say no and positive outlook towards life. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs satisfactorily expresses the significance of self esteem attributing it as mandatory human need necessary to reach self actualization (NAMI, 2016).

**Social Media and Self Esteem**

Based on the most intriguing notion proposed by Psychosocial Perspective, technological advancements have brought tremendous and long lasting changes in the individuals’ way of thinking and personality. Interestingly, the component of self esteem, “appraisal” is limited to the likes and dislikes on the social media (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). A bulk of literature indicates that social media (Instagram, Facebook, Yahoo, Whatsapp, Linkedin and many more) use has negative impact on individual’s self esteem. These effects can be seen exclusively in adolescents who are still on their way to develop self esteem (Vogel et. al., 2014). Its excessive use and upward comparison are terrifically responsible for addiction, somatic concerns, troubled interpersonal relationships, anxiety, depression and narcissism (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006; Walther et. al., 2008; Vogel et. al., 2014; Moreno & Kolb, 2016). Likes and positive commenting from virtual friends acts as an appraisal for adolescents increasing dopamine levels within brain and activating its rewards system. As a result, individual soon becomes addicted to appraisal just like substance drugs (Chen & Lee, 2013). Social media users and friends act as the most “unrealistic” but “powerful role models” even during trivial daily happenings because of their shared stories and pictures. This act is potent enough to generate somatic concerns within individuals who do not find a “perfect” display picture or daily stories to post (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Walter et. al., 2008; Vogel et. al., 2014). Excessive use of social media sites widens communication gap between individuals hence, destroying their real time relationships and leaving them alone (Moreno & Colb, 2011). Narcissism and other psychological illnesses—depression and anxiety—are other leading outcomes of excessive social media use (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

Although, social media use also has positive and constructive effects on personality but these effects are undermined by its unintentional super-colossal use that interrupts adolescents’ subjective and objective wellbeing eminently. As a result, their social, family and academic functioning is impaired.

**Conclusion**

This paper was aimed at analyzing, describing, explaining and documenting the effects of social media use on adolescents. After consulting a bulk of literature from last two decades, it was found that “excessive” social media use has destructive effects on the subjective wellbeing of adolescents mainly encapsulating addiction, somatic concerns, troubled interpersonal relationships, anxiety, depression and narcissism. Preventive measures are of great importance than curative interventions in this regard. Need of the hour is to use this platform carefully and moderately.

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