

## Original Article

## Impact of Social Media on Self-Esteem Among Nursing Students

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The rise of social media has transformed communication dynamics, particularly among nursing students who utilise these platforms for social interaction and academic collaboration. While social media can enhance self-esteem through connection and validation, it also presents risks associated with negative social comparisons, particularly for students under academic stress. **Materials and Methods:** This cross-sectional study included 185 nursing students from a college, with 160 consenting to participate. Data were collected through an online survey comprising a demographic questionnaire, the Social Networking Use Questionnaire (Gupta & Bashir), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS version 21, employing independent t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation coefficients. **Results:** The participants' mean age was 18.76 years, with an average social media usage of 5.24 hours daily. Results indicated a strong correlation between time spent on social media and self-esteem ( $r = 0.342$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while social interaction showed a weaker correlation ( $r = 0.233$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Notably, entertainment and informativeness dimensions did not significantly correlate with self-esteem ( $r = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.861$ ;  $r = 0.061$ ,  $p = 0.923$ ). **Discussion:** The findings reveal a complex relationship between social media use and self-esteem. While social media provides valuable opportunities for connection and information, excessive use can lead to negative self-perceptions. The lack of strong correlations between self-esteem and dimensions like informativeness and entertainment suggests that while these elements are enjoyable, they do not significantly enhance self-worth. **Conclusions:** This study highlights the nuanced impact of social media on nursing students' self-esteem. Future research should investigate conditions that promote positive self-worth versus those that exacerbate negative feelings, informing strategies to foster healthier social media engagement among students.

**Key words:** social media usage, self esteem issues, nursing students

The advent of social media has significantly altered the landscape of communication, particularly among young adults, including nursing students. As they prepare to enter a demanding profession, these students often rely on social media not only for social interaction but also as a platform for academic collaboration and information sharing. While social media can enhance educational experiences by facilitating peer support and access to resources, it also poses potential risks to mental health, particularly concerning self-esteem. Research indicates that social media can be a double-edged sword for self-esteem. On one hand, it offers opportunities for connection and validation, which can positively influence self-worth [1, 2]. For nursing students, the ability to connect with peers and mentors online can create a supportive environment, enhancing feelings of

belonging and self-efficacy. However, excessive engagement and exposure to idealised representations of peers can lead to negative social comparisons, resulting in decreased self-esteem [3]. This is particularly concerning given that nursing students often experience high levels of stress and pressure in their academic pursuits [4].

Additionally, the type of content consumed on social media plays a crucial role in shaping self-esteem. Studies have shown that interactions centered around informative or entertaining content can foster positive self-perceptions, whereas interactions based on social comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy [5]. This dichotomy is critical in understanding the nuanced effects of social media, as nursing students must balance the benefits of information exchange with the potential pitfalls of comparison and judgment.

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Furthermore, self-esteem is closely linked to academic performance and professional development, making it particularly relevant in the context of nursing education [6]. A decline in self-esteem may negatively affect students' engagement in their studies and interactions with patients, which can have broader implications for their future careers in healthcare.

This study aims to explore the impact of social media usage on self-esteem among nursing students, examining various dimensions of social media engagement. By assessing the complex interplay between social media interaction and self-esteem, the research seeks to provide insights that could inform educational strategies and support systems for nursing students, ultimately fostering a healthier balance in their digital lives.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was a cross sectional study was conducted inside the academic environment of nursing college. The research comprised a non probability and convenience sampling of 185 nursing students who were accessible out of which 160 students gave consent for participation. The data collection was done from April 2024 to September 2024 the researcher used an online survey via google form. The first page of the form included the aim of the study, guidelines for filling up the questionnaire and an emphasis on voluntary participation

### Instruments

1. Demographic questionnaire: This questionnaire included age, gender, residence, the amount of time spent daily on social media.
2. Social networking use questionnaire: The questionnaire was originally created and validated by Gupta and Bashir [7]. It was utilised to assess the extent of college students engagement with social media platforms and their purposes for using social networking sites. The questionnaire comprised three categories: 1) Socialisation (5 times), 2) Entertainment (4 times), and 3) informativeness (3 times). A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure participants response, ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (5)
3. Rosenberg self- esteem scale: It was validated by Rosenberg (1965) [8]. In this study, the scale was used to assess self-esteem levels among nursing students. It contains 10 statements, with five phrased positively and five phrased negatively. Responses are rated on a 4-point scale. For positive items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7: Strongly agree = 3, Agree = 2, Disagree = 1, Strongly disagree = 0. Negative items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 (which are reversed in valence): Strongly agree = 0, Agree = 1, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 3 and total scores were averaged across all items. Scores of 2 or below indicate low self-esteem, while scores higher than 2 reflect high (healthy or normal) self-esteem.

### Data analysis

Analysis of data was done by using IBM SPSS version 21. Categorical data was summarised as frequencies and percentages, while continuous data was expressed as mean and standard deviation. Independent t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to compare average scores of the study variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to examine relationships between continuous variables. A value of  $p < 0.01$  was considered statistical significant otherwise non significant.

## RESULTS

The mean age of students was  $18.76 \pm 1.46$  years. Out of the total students 76 % were females. The surveyed students reported an average social media usage duration of 5.24 hours, with a SD of 1.22 hours.

**Table 1: demographic characteristics and differences in the participant's social media usage and self-esteem**

Demographical profile	N	Social media usage	Self-esteemed
<b>Age (in years)</b>		Mean $\pm$ Sd	Mean $\pm$ Sd
<20	102	3.51 $\pm$ 0.29	2.46 $\pm$ 0.66
$\geq$ 20	58	3.48 $\pm$ 0.68	2.52 $\pm$ 0.52
Mean $\pm$ Sd	18.76 $\pm$ 1.46	-	-
t-value	-	0.388	0.595
p-value	-	0.698 (N.S)	0.552 (N.S)
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	84	3.44 $\pm$ 0.66	2.43 $\pm$ 0.34
Female	76	3.36 $\pm$ 0.68	2.56 $\pm$ 0.65
t-value	-	0.943	1.606
p-value	-	0.346	0.110 (N.S)
<b>Residence</b>			
Rural	74	3.88 $\pm$ 0.45	2.77 $\pm$ 0.34
Urban	86	3.69 $\pm$ 0.81	2.65 $\pm$ 0.72
t-value	-	1.78	1.368
p-value	-	0.07	0.173 (N.S)
<b>Time spend on social media</b>			
1-3 hour	29	3.86 $\pm$ 0.98	2.45 $\pm$ 0.66
4-6 hour	82	5.12 $\pm$ 1.23	2.91 $\pm$ 0.67
>6 hour	49	6.76 $\pm$ 1.46	2.84 $\pm$ 0.42
F-value	-	51.70	6.358
p-value	-	0.0001*	0.002*

\*indicates significance p value

The data highlights a strong correlation between time spent on social media and both social media usage and self-esteem levels. Those who spend more than six hours daily exhibit the highest usage and a moderate increase in self-esteem, suggesting that extensive engagement may enhance social connections or self-perception. Conversely, demographic factors like age, gender, and residence do not significantly affect these outcomes, indicating that the implications of social media engagement are more influenced by time rather than individual characteristics. This finding emphasizes the need for further research on how prolonged social media use impacts mental well-being and social interactions.

**Table 2: Mean scores of the study variables**

The study variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean $\pm$ SD
Social Media Usage	1	5	3.65 $\pm$ 0.33
Informativeness	1	5	3.86 $\pm$ 0.68
Social	1	5	3.45 $\pm$ 0.29
Entertainment	1	5	4.13 $\pm$ 0.56
Self esteem	1	5	3.86 $\pm$ 0.43

Entertainment is the most valued aspect of social media usage, with a mean score of 4.13, suggesting users find significant enjoyment in their online activities. Informativeness and self-esteem scores are also relatively high, indicating that users perceive social media as a valuable source of information and feel positively about themselves. Social interaction, while still important, is slightly lower, suggesting users may prioritise entertainment and information over social engagement. Overall, these findings suggest a nuanced understanding of social media's role in users' lives, emphasising its multifaceted impact on both enjoyment and self-perception.

**Table 3: Correlation between social media usage and Self esteemed**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Social media usage	1.00	-	-	-	-
Informativeness	0.841*	1.00	-	-	-
Entertainment	0.881*	0.448*	1.00	-	-
Social	0.873*	0.776*	0.852*	1.00	-
Self esteem	0.342*	0.092	0.061	0.233*	1.00

\*indicated highly significance

### The correlation matrix reveals significant relationships among the variables related to social media usage

**Social Media Usage:** Exhibits a strong positive correlation with Informativeness ( $r = 0.841^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Entertainment ( $r = 0.881^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and Social Interaction ( $r = 0.873^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher usage is associated with increased perceptions of these dimensions.

**Informativeness:** Correlates strongly with Social Interaction ( $r = 0.776^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that users who find social media informative also engage more socially. The correlation with Entertainment is moderate ( $r = 0.448^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Entertainment:** Shows a strong positive correlation with Social Interaction ( $r = 0.852^*$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that users who engage in entertaining content are likely to have enhanced social connections.

**Self-Esteem:** Displays a moderate positive correlation with Social Media Usage ( $r = 0.342^*$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting some connection between engagement and self-worth. However, there is no correlations with Informativeness ( $r = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.861$ ) and Entertainment ( $r = 0.061$ ,  $p = 0.923$ ) whereas Social Interaction ( $r = 0.233^*$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) shows weak correlation, indicating that these factors have a limited impact on self-esteem.

Overall, while social media usage is strongly linked to informativeness, entertainment, and social interaction, its direct influence on self-esteem is less pronounced, pointing to a complex interplay between these variables.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to assess the relationship between usage of social media and its effect on self-esteem. There is a complex relationship between the two entities. On one hand media platforms can foster connection, communication and allow users to share experiences and in return receive validation. On the other side, social media can also lead to negative comparisons, anxiety, stress, feeling of inadequacy and low self esteem. The constant use of filters can distort reality and set high unrealistic standards.

The analysis of social media usage, self-esteem, and associated dimensions such as informativeness, entertainment, and social interaction reveals a complex landscape that merits further exploration. The correlation matrix indicates strong relationships between social media usage and its dimensions, suggesting that users who engage with social media perceive it as a valuable source of information and enjoyment. Specifically, the high correlations between social media usage and informativeness ( $r = 0.841$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and entertainment ( $r = 0.881$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) reflect findings from Kuss and Griffiths (2017)[9], who noted that users often seek social media for both social connection and content consumption. This duality underlines social media's role in modern communication and

interaction, aligning with Valkenburg and Peter's (2011) integrated model, which posits that online platforms provide unique opportunities for social engagement and information sharing.

Despite the positive correlations observed in entertainment and social interaction, self-esteem's relationship with social media usage appears more nuanced. The moderate correlation ( $r = 0.342$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) suggests that while there is some connection between social media engagement and self-worth, it is not overwhelmingly strong. This finding resonates with existing literature indicating that social media can contribute to self-esteem, particularly through social comparison and validation (Vogel et al., 2014). However, this relationship may be contingent on various factors, such as individual personality traits and offline experiences, as highlighted by Seabrook et al. (2016), who found that excessive social media use might correlate with increased feelings of loneliness and depression.

Interestingly, the lack of strong correlations between self-esteem and dimensions such as informativeness ( $r = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.861$ ) and entertainment ( $r = 0.061$ ,  $p = 0.923$ ) suggests that these elements do not significantly enhance self-worth. This aligns with research by Primack et al. (2017) [10], which posits that while social media can facilitate social connections, it may also foster feelings of inadequacy when users engage in social comparison. Users may find entertainment value in social media without it translating into a meaningful boost in self-esteem, as the immediate gratification of entertainment may not fulfill deeper psychological needs (Twenge et al., 2018) [11].

Additionally, the weak correlation between social interaction and self-esteem ( $r = 0.233$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) points to a critical consideration: not all social interactions on social media contribute positively to self-worth. Instead, interactions may lead to feelings of comparison and inadequacy, especially if individuals perceive others as having more fulfilling lives [12]. This is consistent with findings from Przybylski and Weinstein (2019) [13], which indicate that digital interactions do not necessarily equate to improved psychological well-being.

Moreover, the demographic data provides essential context to these relationships. The mean scores for social media usage (3.65) and self-esteem (3.86) suggest that participants generally engage with social media positively. However, the lack of significant differences based on age, gender, and residence indicates that the impact of social media transcends these demographic boundaries. This finding supports the argument that social media's effects are more related to usage patterns than individual characteristics [14].

In contrast, the dimension of time spent on social media, as reported in the previous tables, demonstrated significant impacts on both social media usage and self-esteem. Users

who spent more than six hours daily on social media showed higher engagement and slightly elevated self-esteem. This finding suggests that while prolonged engagement may lead to increased social interaction and entertainment, it may also foster negative outcomes if such usage becomes excessive (Seabrook et al., 2016).

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the combined insights from the correlation matrix, descriptive statistics, and demographic data underscore the nuanced interplay between social media engagement and self-esteem. While social media serves as a valuable tool for connection and information, its influence on self-esteem is complex and requires further investigation. Researchers should explore the conditions under which social media fosters positive self-worth versus exacerbates negative feelings, particularly as social media continues to evolve in its role within society.

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