



A Study on Media Addiction, Sleep Health and Body Image Distress among Young Adults

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Abstract

In this digital world, where information is everything and popularity is often quantified by the number of followers, social media apps play a vital role in an individual's knowledge and popularity. On the bright side, this digital era fosters global awareness, bridges distance and keeps us well-informed, but on the dark side lies numerous side-effects; social media addiction, unhealthy comparison, cyber bullying, negative emotional impacts, increasing screen-time and deteriorating sleep quality especially among the young adults and adolescents. The current study assessed the link between social media addiction, sleep quality and body image distress among the young adults. A sample of 42 participants between the age group of 18-25 were recorded using The Body and Appearance Self-conscious Emotion Scale (BASES), The Bergen Social Media

Addiction Scale (BSMAS) and the Sleep Quality Scale (SQS). The result indicated that no significant correlation was found between media addiction levels and sleep quality or body image perception, nor between sleep quality and body image perception.

Keywords: *Body image anxiety, social media addiction, sleep disturbance, young adults, sleep health*

Introduction

Social media addiction can be defined as the compulsive and excessive use of social media platforms, where individuals feel the need to constantly check, engage, and spend significant amounts of time on them despite the negative impacts on their daily life. It often gives rise to undesirable behaviors such as feeling anxious or restless without access to social media, excessive procrastination and seeking validation through the likes, comments and shares leading to issues like poor sleep quality, low self-esteem, and increased anxiety or depression. A study was conducted on 232 college students to examine the relations of social media addiction to college student's mental health and academic performance and the role of self-esteem as a mediator for the relations. The results found that social media addiction was negatively associated with the student's mental health and academic performance (Hou et al., 2019). Another Study was conducted on 200 medical students at Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College, Ajmer to explore the prevalence of social networking sites addiction and associated psychological problems in young adults using The Depression Anxiety Stress scale-21 (DASS-21) and General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12). The result indicated that excessive SNSs use among students is associated with increased psychological symptoms, including symptoms of stress and anxiety (Meena et al., 2015).

Sleep health refers to the state of having adequate quality, duration and timing of sleep that supports optimal physical, mental and emotional well-being. It is not the absence of sleep disorder, rather the presence of proper sleep behaviors that enhances overall health and functioning. Typically, 7-9 hours of sleep-in adults is essential for proper relaxation. Young adults (18-25) experience challenges with sleep quality due to academic stress, lifestyle habits and prolonged exposure to technology. A study was conducted on 67 healthy young adults to assess the role of Poor sleep quality in cognitive functioning independent of depression and anxiety using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, second edition (MMPI-2), the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), and tests of attention and executive functions. The result showed that participants who reported poor sleep quality on the PSQI endorsed significantly greater scores on MMPI-2. Additionally, PSQI component scores indexing poor sleep quality, duration, and medication use were associated with diminished attention and executive functions (Benitez, & Gunstad., 2012). Another Study was conducted on 1,125 college students to characterize sleep patterns and predictors of poor sleep quality in a large population of college students using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), the Epworth Sleepiness Scale, the Horne-Ostberg Morningness–eveningness Scale, the Profile of Mood States, the Subjective Units of Distress Scale, and questions about academic performance, physical health, and psychoactive drug use. The results demonstrate that insufficient sleep and irregular sleep–wake patterns, which have been extensively documented in younger adolescents, are also present at alarming levels in the college student population (Lund et al., 2010).

Body image anxiety can be defined as individual's distorted perception of their body appearance, especially weight and shape. This issue is observed largely among adolescents and young adults owing to their vulnerability to succumb to family and peer pressure, societal

expectations, media's portrayal of 'the perfect body image' as well as their fear of being isolated from the social group. A study was conducted on undergraduate students at Health Science Faculty UiTM, Malaysia, to identify the relationship between body image perception, body shape concern with body shape dissatisfaction (BSD) using self-reported body mass index (BMI), self-rating Body Silhouette and Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-16A). The result showed that almost 48% of females were dissatisfied with their body shape, and 44% of males desired to be heavier (Kamaria, Mohan & Ayiesah, 2016). Another study was conducted on 156 participants to explore Body image, social anxiety and psychological distress among young adults using the Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI), Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). It was found that there was a positive correlation between Body Image and Social Anxiety as well as in Body Image and Psychological Distress (Luqman, & Dixit., 2017).

Social Media Addiction

Andreassen and Pallesen (2014), defined social media addiction "as an excessive preoccupation with social networking sites (SNSs), characterized by a powerful urge to constantly engage with them, which can negatively impact other aspects of life like work, relationships, studies, social activities, and overall psychological well-being".

Chou and Edge (2012) defined social media addiction as when a person feels an extreme compulsion to log in or use social media. These individuals may also feel an overwhelming concern about social media, leading to neglect of personal and professional responsibilities.

Body Image Anxiety

Castonguay et al., (2014) described social physique anxiety as "the anxiety individuals experience when they perceive that others are evaluating their bodies. This form of anxiety is particularly prevalent in contexts where physical appearance is emphasized, such as fitness or

sports settings, and it is associated with negative body image, lower self-esteem, and avoidance of physical activity.”

Sabiston et al. (2019) described body image as a “complex and multifaceted construct that encompasses how individuals perceive, think and feel about their physical appearance. It plays a critical role in mental health, influencing behavior, emotions, and overall well-being. Disturbance in body images is linked to various psychological issues, including disordered eating, depression, and anxiety.”

Sleep Health

Buysse (2014) defined sleep health as “a multidimensional pattern of sleep-wakefulness that adapts to individual, social, and environmental needs, promoting physical and mental well-being. Poor sleep health is linked to decreased cognitive functioning, mood disturbances, and long-term health risks such as cardiovascular diseases.”

Knutson et al. (2017) defined sleep health as “a key component of overall health, encompassing dimensions like sleep duration, continuity, timing, and satisfaction. Poor sleep health contributes to adverse outcomes such as reduced mental clarity, emotional instability, and increased susceptibility to illnesses.”

Review of Literature

A study was conducted on 380 students at University Teknologi MARA's main campus in Shah Alam using google forms to study social media addiction. The study revealed that the student's addiction is mild and not severe. However, the result between addiction and medication to social media affects young adults' emotions. It is believed that this will lead to consequences on young adults' emotions (Abd Rahman & Abdul Razak., 2019).

A study was conducted on 665 students at Bingöl University using statistical methods, including Descriptive statistics, Kruskal Wallis Test, One-Way ANOVA test, Factor Analysis, and Correlation Analysis. The results revealed a significant difference in the "conflict" factor, showing that males spend more time on social media rather than focusing on their daily responsibilities and activities. This was strongly correlated with gender, indicating that males tend to be more addicted to social media. Additionally, the study found the strongest correlation between relapse and conflict factors, meaning individuals who experience more conflict due to social media use are more likely to relapse. The "conflict" factor was identified as the most influential element in the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), highlighting its key role in social media addiction (Aslan & Yasar., 2020).

A study was conducted on 160 undergraduate female students to estimate the range of body image dissatisfaction. The result found that 79% have difficulty accepting their body image even with 87.7% of them being in the normal and underweight category (Pop, 2018).

Research was conducted on 614 college students to study exercise behavior and image anxiety. The result shows that BIA was controlled by both extrinsic and autonomous extrinsic Self-Determination theory motivational variables, as well as intrinsic motivation, suggesting a more intrinsic approach to fostering long-term exercise maintenance (Scioli-Salter et al., 2014).

Research was conducted on 859 undergraduates at a large southeastern university. Results indicated that 76.6% reported occasional sleep problems and 11.8% experienced poor sleep quality. Among the problems reported, "general morning tiredness" (82%) and "insomnia" (28%) were the most common. Certain health risk behaviors appear to be associated with poor sleep quality including fighting, suicide ideation, smoking, and alcohol use. Implications and limitations of the study were identified (Vail-Smith, Felts, & Becker., 2009).

A study was conducted on 319 university students to study the Relationship of smartphone use severity with sleep quality, depression, and anxiety in university students using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, Beck Depression Inventory, and Beck Anxiety Inventory. The findings revealed a Positive correlation between the Smartphone Addiction Scale scores and depression levels, anxiety levels, and some sleep quality scores. The results indicated that depression, anxiety, and sleep quality may be associated with smartphone overuse (Yildirim, Onder, & Avci., 2020).

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to study media addiction on sleep Health and body image distress among young adults

Hypothesis

1. There will be a significant negative correlation between media addiction and sleep duration.
2. There will be significant positive correlation between media addiction and body image anxiety.
3. There will be significant negative correlation between sleep duration and body image anxiety.

Method

Sample

A total sample of (N=42) in the age group of 18-25 was collected from the city of Vijaya Puram.

Measure

The Body and Appearance Self-conscious Emotion Scale (BASES): The Body and Appearance self-conscious emotion scale, as developed by Castonguay and colleagues (2014), is

a 16-item self-report measure. The BASES contain 4 subscales: shame, guilt, authentic pride, and hubristic pride. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) : The Bergen social media addiction scale, as developed by Andreassen and colleagues (2016) is a six-item self-report scale where individuals rate how often they experience statements related to social media preoccupation, withdrawal, tolerance, and negative consequences, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very rarely" to "very often" to assess potential social media addiction.

Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) : Sleep Quality Scale is a 28-item self-report scale that evaluates six domains of sleep quality: daytime symptoms, restoration after sleep, problems initiating and maintaining sleep, difficulty waking, and Sleep satisfaction using a four-point, Likert-type scale, respondents indicate how frequently they exhibit certain sleep behaviors (0 = "few," 1 = "sometimes," 2 = "often," and 3 = "almost always"). Scores on items belong to factors 2 and 5 (restoration after sleep and satisfaction with sleep) and are reversed before being tallied.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and the questionnaire was filled out through Google Forms; each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of data

Results

Table 1: Descriptives

	Media addiction	Sleep Quality	Shame	Guilt	Authentic Pride	Hubristic Pride
N	42	42	42	42	42	42
Mean	14.4	36.6	10.0	11.3	12.1	11.6
Standard deviation	4.81	12.9	4.60	4.22	3.62	3.85

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	Media addiction	Sleep Quality	Shame	Guilt	Authentic Pride	Hubristic Pride
Media addiction	—					
Sleep quality	0.105	—				
Shame	0.266	0.287	—			
Guilt	0.252	0.273	0.854***	—		
Authentic Pride	0.239	0.087	0.086	0.247	—	

Hubristic Pride	0.116	-0.111	-0.190	0.007	0.741***	—
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Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion of Results

In the present generation, the impact of media addiction on sleep quality and self-perception is far from trivial. Media holds the power to shape not only how we view ourselves but also how we perceive the world around us. It can either bolster self-esteem or shatter it into pieces. The growing addiction to social media apps has become a global concern, profoundly affecting the sleep quality of millions. Adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable, facing significant repercussions for their mental health as well as the quality and quantity of their sleep.

The results indicate a positive correlation between guilt and shame ($r = 0.854$, $p < .001$). Additionally, a positive correlation was found between hubristic pride and authentic pride ($r = 0.741$, $p < .001$). However, no correlation was observed between media addiction levels and sleep quality or body image perception, nor between sleep quality and body image perception. Consequently, the hypothesis is rejected. This outcome may be attributed to various other factors beyond observation, such as bias, individual personality traits, cultural influences, screen-time management, and lifestyle habits. Nonetheless, several other studies have reported a significant correlation between media addiction, sleep quality, and body image perception.

Research was conducted to assess the relationship between daily screen time and sleep, evening screen time and sleep, and between social media addiction and sleep in a student population with the data collected from a national survey of all college and university students in

Norway (n= 49,051). The results show a strong negative association between time spent on screen-based devices and sleep quality and quantity, and where screen use in bed had more consistent negative associations with sleep. Furthermore, there were higher rates of insomnia among those with higher levels of addiction, and curvilinear relationships with sleep duration, sleep onset latency, and sleep efficiency. The findings suggest that screen use plays an important role in students' sleep quantity and quality (Hjetland et al., 2021). Another study was conducted on 1,788 young adults in the age range of 19-32 to assess the association between social media use and sleep disturbance among young adults using items adapted from the Pew Internet Research Questionnaire and the brief Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS®) sleep disturbance measure. The result indicated that participants with higher Social media use had significantly greater odds of having sleep disturbance (Levenson et al., 2016).

A study was conducted on 168 college women to assess the impact of media addiction on body dissatisfaction and disordered eating attitudes using validated surveys (EAT-26, BSQ, CIPE-a, SNSA) and indirect measures of prenatal testosterone. The findings presented in this study suggest a relationship between body image, body concerns, body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating attitudes among college women (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019). Another Study conducted in 2020 examined the relationship between social networking site (SNS) usage, body image dissatisfaction, and body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). The findings revealed that passive SNS use (e.g., browsing without interaction) and appearance-focused SNS use were particularly impactful in influencing body image dissatisfaction (Ryding, & Kuss., 2020).

Another study was aimed to evaluate the association of sleep duration and sleep quality with BMI among young adults taken from 88 individuals selected from King George's Medical University using the Pittsburgh sleep quality index (PSQI) questionnaire. The findings concluded

that short sleep duration and poor sleep quality were associated with overweight obesity among young adults (Gupta et al., 2022). A study was conducted to explore the association between social media addiction (SMA) and executive functioning (EF) among 1051 Chinese young adults aged 18 to 27 years using structural equation modeling. The findings indicated that Social media addiction was negatively associated with Executive functioning and positively associated with emotional disturbance and poor sleep quality (Zhang et al., 2023).

While the findings did not establish a significant correlation between media addiction and sleep quality or body image perception, nor between sleep quality and body image perception, the previous studies have highlighted important connections. These discrepancies suggest further investigation into these complex relationships.

Conclusion

The current study has several limitations that need to be addressed. One is that the small sample size (N=42) and the homogenous age group of the participants (18-25) may hinder the generalization of the findings as it provides less precise estimates and may not accurately represent the larger population. Second, the participants may have also included bias by manipulating their responses to present socially desirable outcomes.

The future research could explore the nuanced relationship between media addiction, sleep quality, and body image perception by incorporating larger and more diverse samples.

While the present study was unable to find a correlation, prior research has consistently shown that excessive media usage negatively impacts sleep quality and body image perception. This highlights the urgent need for effective strategies to address these issues. Recommended practices include engaging in digital detoxes, setting screen-time limits, avoiding caffeine and

electronics before bedtime, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, practicing relaxation techniques, and consuming nutrient-rich foods. Additionally, limiting social media exposure, avoiding sugary and processed foods, and fostering a supportive social network are essential steps toward improving overall well-being and reducing the adverse effects of media addiction.

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