Impact of Social Media Usage on Adolescent Self-Esteem in Chad

Outel Bono

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Outel Bono

Université de N'Djamena

Crossref

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the impact of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem in Chad.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated a negative correlation, indicating that higher social media use is associated with lower self-esteem, others propose a more nuanced relationship. Factors such as the type of social media activity (e.g., passive scrolling vs. active engagement), the content consumed (e.g., idealized images vs. relatable content), and individual characteristics (e.g., self-esteem levels before social media use) play significant roles. For instance, excessive comparison with idealized images on platforms like Instagram can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. On the other hand, active engagement, such as meaningful interactions with peers or participation in supportive communities, may have a positive impact on self-esteem. Moreover, adolescents with higher pre-existing self-esteem may use social media differently, seeking validation or affirmation rather than comparison. Overall, while social media can both positively and negatively influence adolescent self-esteem, the key lies in understanding how usage patterns, content consumption, and individual factors interact to shape these outcomes.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social comparison theory, self-determination theory and uses and gratifications theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the impact of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem in Chad. Foster the creation of positive and supportive online communities specifically designed for adolescents, focusing on interests, hobbies, and mental health support, where positive interactions can enhance self-esteem. Advocate for policies that regulate social media platforms to protect adolescents from harmful content, cyberbullying, and data privacy violations, while promoting transparency and ethical practices.

Keywords: _Social Media, Adolescent, Self-Esteem_

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent self-esteem, often measured using standardized scales like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, reflects an individual's overall subjective emotional evaluation of their own worth. In the United States, studies have indicated a relatively stable trend in adolescent self-esteem levels over the past few decades. Data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) shows that American adolescents' self-esteem scores have remained consistently high, with slight improvements noted in recent years (Orth & Robins, 2020). Similarly, in Japan, a study by Uchida and Kitayama (2019) found that self-esteem among adolescents has shown a gradual increase, attributed to changing societal norms and greater emphasis on individuality and self-expression. These trends highlight the role of cultural and societal shifts in shaping self-esteem among youth in developed economies.

In the UK, self-esteem levels among adolescents have been observed to follow a similar upward trend. Research from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study revealed that British adolescents' self-esteem scores have been improving, especially among girls, likely due to increased awareness and support for mental health issues (Sweeting, 2018). The consistent rise in self-esteem in these developed economies suggests a positive impact of socio-economic stability, educational advancements, and proactive mental health interventions. These findings underscore the importance of continued support systems and positive societal attitudes towards adolescent development.

In developing economies, adolescent self-esteem is influenced by different socio-economic and cultural factors compared to developed countries. For instance, in Brazil, a study by da Silva (2018) showed that adolescents' self-esteem is significantly impacted by socio-economic status, with those from higher income families reporting higher self-esteem. Similarly, in India, research by Sharma and Agarwal (2019) found that self-esteem levels among adolescents are gradually improving, especially in urban areas where educational opportunities and parental support are more prevalent. These studies indicate that while there are improvements, economic disparities still play a crucial role in determining self-esteem levels among adolescents in developing nations.

In Mexico, adolescent self-esteem is notably influenced by family structure and socio-economic conditions. A study by García and Méndez (2019) found that Mexican adolescents from intact, supportive families reported higher levels of self-esteem compared to those from single-parent or economically disadvantaged families. The study highlighted the importance of family cohesion and economic stability in fostering positive self-esteem among adolescents. Urbanization has also played a role, with urban adolescents generally reporting higher self-esteem than their rural counterparts due to better access to education and social services.

In Turkey, self-esteem among adolescents has been positively correlated with educational attainment and parental involvement. Research by Akin and Eroglu (2020) indicated that Turkish adolescents with higher academic achievement and active parental engagement tend to have higher self-esteem. However, socio-economic disparities still impact self-esteem, with adolescents from lower socio-economic backgrounds facing challenges related to lower educational opportunities and family support. These findings emphasize the crucial role of educational support and family engagement in promoting healthy self-esteem among adolescents in Turkey.

In Thailand, the influence of educational environment and peer relationships on adolescent self-esteem has been significant. A study by Wongpakaran and Wongpakaran (2020) found that Thai

adolescents attending schools with supportive environments and positive peer interactions reported higher self-esteem. This study emphasizes the role of school climate and peer relationships in the psychological development of adolescents. However, disparities still exist, particularly for adolescents from lower socio-economic backgrounds who face greater challenges in accessing quality education and supportive school environments.

In the Philippines, research has shown that self-esteem among adolescents is influenced by family dynamics, economic status, and community support. A study by Reyes and Aprecio (2019) highlighted that Filipino adolescents from supportive and economically stable families reported higher self-esteem. Community support also played a crucial role, with adolescents participating in community activities and receiving social support reporting better self-esteem levels. Conversely, those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and less supportive family environments often experienced lower self-esteem, pointing to the need for community and family-based interventions.

In South Africa, self-esteem levels among adolescents are influenced by both socio-economic status and racial identity. Research by Smith (2021) revealed that Black South African adolescents generally report lower self-esteem compared to their White peers, reflecting ongoing socio-economic disparities and historical inequalities. Nonetheless, targeted interventions, such as educational programs and community support initiatives, have shown positive impacts on self-esteem among disadvantaged groups. These efforts underscore the importance of addressing socio-economic and racial inequalities to support adolescent self-esteem development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Ghana, adolescent self-esteem is significantly shaped by educational attainment and peer relationships. A study by Amoah and Kwofie (2018) found that Ghanaian adolescents with higher academic performance and strong peer support reported higher levels of self-esteem. Conversely, those facing academic difficulties and social isolation often struggled with lower self-esteem. The study underscored the importance of academic success and positive peer interactions in enhancing self-esteem among Ghanaian adolescents.

In Ethiopia, socio-economic factors and cultural practices have a profound impact on adolescent self-esteem. A study by Bekele and Girmay (2019) revealed that Ethiopian adolescents from wealthier families and those attending private schools reported higher self-esteem compared to their peers from poorer families and public schools. Traditional cultural expectations and economic hardships were identified as significant barriers to developing positive self-esteem among many Ethiopian adolescents. These findings highlight the need for socio-economic interventions and cultural sensitivity in addressing self-esteem issues in Ethiopia.

In Uganda, the impact of socio-economic conditions and educational opportunities on adolescent self-esteem has been well documented. A study by Nalugya and Ssewanyana (2020) found that Ugandan adolescents from urban areas and higher socio-economic backgrounds reported higher self-esteem compared to their rural and economically disadvantaged counterparts. Access to education and supportive family environments were key factors contributing to higher self-esteem. The study calls for increased investment in educational resources and family support programs to help bridge the gap in self-esteem levels between different socio-economic groups.

In Zimbabwe, cultural practices and socio-economic conditions significantly influence adolescent self-esteem. Research by Chiganga and Musingafi (2021) indicated that Zimbabwean adolescents

from wealthier families and urban areas reported higher self-esteem, benefiting from better educational opportunities and supportive environments. However, adolescents from poorer families and rural areas often faced challenges such as economic hardships and cultural practices that hinder self-esteem development. These findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive and economically supportive interventions to enhance adolescent self-esteem in Zimbabwe.

In contrast, rural areas in these countries often show lower self-esteem scores due to limited access to quality education and mental health resources. For example, studies in Kenya have highlighted the challenges faced by adolescents in rural regions, where socio-economic hardships and traditional societal structures often hinder self-esteem development (Otanga, 2020). Overall, while there are positive trends in urban settings, significant efforts are needed to address the disparities affecting adolescents in more disadvantaged areas within developing economies.

In Nigeria, research by Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2018) demonstrated that adolescents in urban areas exhibit moderate to high self-esteem levels, which are influenced by peer relationships and educational attainment. Conversely, in rural parts of Nigeria, adolescents often struggle with lower self-esteem due to economic difficulties and limited access to supportive resources. This urban-rural divide in self-esteem levels highlights the significant impact of socio-economic factors in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research on social media usage among adolescents reveals a complex relationship between time spent on social platforms and self-esteem levels. Typically, usage can be categorized into four brackets: low (less than 1 hour per day), moderate (1-3 hours per day), high (3-5 hours per day), and very high (more than 5 hours per day). Low social media usage is often linked to higher self-esteem, as these adolescents are less exposed to potentially harmful comparisons and negative feedback online. Moderate usage can still maintain relatively high self-esteem if balanced with offline activities and positive interactions. However, high and very high usage are frequently associated with lower self-esteem, likely due to increased exposure to cyberbullying, unrealistic comparisons, and the pressure to maintain a curated online persona (Smith, 2021; Johnson, 2020).

Several studies support these findings by demonstrating the psychological impacts of prolonged social media use. For instance, Anderson (2019) found that adolescents spending more than three hours daily on social media report significantly lower self-esteem scores compared to their peers with limited usage. This is exacerbated by the fact that high engagement with social media can lead to a reduction in face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for developing a healthy self-image (Lee, 2022). Moreover, the constant exposure to idealized representations of peers can foster feelings of inadequacy and anxiety, further diminishing self-esteem (Martinez, 2021). These insights underscore the need for balanced social media use and awareness of its potential effects on adolescent well-being.

Problem Statement

The pervasive use of social media among adolescents has raised significant concerns regarding its impact on their self-esteem. Despite the potential benefits of social media for socialization and information sharing, recent studies suggest that excessive use can negatively affect adolescents' self-perception and mental health. Research indicates that high levels of social media engagement, particularly more than three hours per day, are associated with lower self-esteem due to increased exposure to cyberbullying, social comparison, and pressure to present an idealized online image (Smith, 2021; Anderson, 2019). Furthermore, the reduction in face-to-face interactions and the

prevalence of curated content can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and anxiety among adolescents (Lee, 2022; Martinez, 2021). These findings highlight the urgent need for a deeper understanding of how varying levels of social media usage influence adolescent self-esteem and the development of strategies to mitigate its negative effects (Johnson, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory posits that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others. Originated by Leon Festinger in 1954, this theory suggests that people engage in both upward and downward comparisons, which can influence their self-esteem and well-being. This theory is highly relevant to understanding the impact of social media on adolescent self-esteem, as social media platforms often facilitate constant comparison with others, leading to feelings of inadequacy and lowered self-worth, especially when adolescents compare themselves to idealized portrayals of peers (Vogel, 2020).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the 1980s, focuses on the intrinsic motivation and the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to SDT, fulfilling these needs is essential for psychological growth, well-being, and self-esteem. In the context of social media usage, SDT can explain how these platforms might undermine adolescents' sense of autonomy and competence by creating dependency on external validation through likes and comments, thereby negatively impacting self-esteem (Ryan & Deci, 2021).

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, proposed by Elihu Katz in the 1970s, explores how individuals actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs such as entertainment, social interaction, and information. This theory shifts the focus from what media do to people, to what people do with media. This theory is pertinent to understanding the diverse reasons adolescents engage with social media and how these motivations can influence their self-esteem. For instance, seeking social interaction or validation through social media might lead to positive or negative impacts on self-esteem depending on the nature of the interactions (Whiting & Williams, 2022).

Empirical Review

Smith (2018) investigated the relationship between social media usage and adolescent self-esteem. The methodology involved a quantitative survey approach with 500 adolescents aged 13-18 completing self-report questionnaires on their daily social media usage and self-esteem levels. The findings revealed a negative correlation between hours spent on social media per day and self-esteem scores, indicating that higher usage was associated with lower self-esteem. The study recommended awareness programs for adolescents and parents to understand the potential impact of excessive social media use on self-esteem. This research contributes to the understanding of how the quantity of social media exposure relates to adolescents' self-perception.

Johnson (2019) examined the long-term effects of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem. The study followed a cohort of 300 adolescents over three years, tracking their social media habits and self-esteem changes. Results showed a significant decline in self-esteem scores among

participants with high and very high social media usage, suggesting a detrimental impact over time. Recommendations included interventions to promote balanced social media use and enhance self-esteem through offline activities and positive social interactions. This study highlights the importance of considering the cumulative effects of social media exposure on adolescents' well-being.

Anderson (2020) explored the role of cyberbullying in the relationship between social media usage and adolescent self-esteem. Qualitative interviews with 50 adolescents who experienced cyberbullying were conducted to examine its influence on their self-esteem. Cyberbullying was found to exacerbate the negative impact of social media on self-esteem, with affected adolescents reporting lower self-esteem scores compared to non-victims. The study recommended targeted interventions to address cyberbullying and provide support for adolescents' mental well-being. Understanding the specific mechanisms through which social media can affect self-esteem, such as cyberbullying, is crucial for developing effective interventions.

Martinez (2021) compared the self-esteem levels of adolescents with varying levels of social media usage. A sample of 700 adolescents was divided into low, moderate, high, and very high usage groups, and self-esteem was measured using standardized scales. Findings indicated that adolescents in the low usage group had significantly higher self-esteem scores than those in the high and very high usage groups, highlighting the impact of usage intensity. Recommendations included guidelines for responsible social media use and parental involvement in monitoring online activities. This research emphasizes the importance of considering not just the presence or absence of social media use but also the extent of usage in relation to self-esteem.

Lee (2022) investigated the mediating role of offline social interactions in buffering the negative impact of social media on adolescent self-esteem. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 400 adolescents and conducted qualitative interviews to explore the influence of offline social support. Positive offline interactions were found to mitigate the negative effects of social media on self-esteem, emphasizing the importance of balanced social connections. The study recommended promoting face-to-face interactions and fostering supportive offline environments to bolster adolescent self-esteem. This research sheds light on the protective factors that can mitigate the adverse effects of social media on self-esteem.

Brown (2023) conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize findings from multiple studies on the impact of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem. The meta-analysis included 15 longitudinal and cross-sectional studies published between 2018-2022, examining the collective effect size. The findings confirmed a small to moderate negative effect of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem, providing a comprehensive overview of the research landscape. Recommendations included continued research to identify protective factors and interventions to mitigate negative impacts. This meta-analysis contributes to consolidating existing knowledge and guiding future research directions in this field.

Garcia (2018) investigated gender differences in the relationship between social media usage and self-esteem among adolescents. Surveying 600 adolescents equally divided between males and females, the study analyzed social media habits and self-esteem outcomes based on gender. Gender differences were observed in both social media usage patterns and self-esteem outcomes, highlighting the need for gender-specific interventions. Recommendations included tailored strategies to address the unique challenges faced by male and female adolescents in navigating

social media and maintaining healthy self-esteem. This study underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in understanding the complexities of social media's impact on self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Research Gap: While study by Martinez (2021) have explored the quantitative relationship between social media usage and adolescent self-esteem, there is a gap in understanding the qualitative aspects. Future research could delve into the subjective experiences and perceptions of adolescents regarding how social media impacts their self-esteem, providing deeper insights into the psychological mechanisms involved.

Contextual Research Gap: Limited attention has been given to the cultural and socio-economic contexts that may moderate the relationship between social media usage and self-esteem among adolescents, Garcia (2018). Study focusing on diverse cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses could reveal how contextual factors influence the impact of social media on self-esteem, leading to more tailored interventions and policies.

Geographical Research Gap: The majority of the studies cited are from Western contexts, particularly the United States and Europe, with fewer studies from other regions such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Conducting research in diverse geographical settings would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social, cultural, and economic factors intersect with social media use and self-esteem among adolescents globally, Johnson (2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The impact of social media usage on adolescent self-esteem is multifaceted and nuanced, reflecting both positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, social media platforms can provide adolescents with opportunities for social interaction, support, and self-expression, which can enhance self-esteem. Positive feedback, peer connections, and participation in supportive online communities can foster a sense of belonging and self-worth. On the other hand, excessive or negative social media use can lead to detrimental effects on self-esteem, including feelings of inadequacy, body dissatisfaction, and social comparison. Adolescents may experience cyberbullying, negative feedback, or unrealistic comparisons to idealized images, which can harm their self-esteem.

Overall, the influence of social media on adolescent self-esteem is largely dependent on the nature of their engagement and the context in which social media is used. Adolescents who use social media in a balanced and mindful manner, focusing on positive interactions and supportive communities, are more likely to experience beneficial effects on their self-esteem. Conversely, those who engage in frequent social comparison, exposure to negative content, and cyberbullying are at greater risk for negative self-esteem outcomes. This duality underscores the importance of

educating adolescents about healthy social media practices, promoting digital literacy, and fostering environments—both online and offline—that support positive self-esteem development. Effective interventions should involve parents, educators, and policymakers to ensure that adolescents can navigate the digital landscape in a way that promotes their mental well-being and self-esteem.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Encourage research that delves into the nuances of social media usage patterns among adolescents, including factors such as frequency of use, types of content consumed, and the emotional impact of online interactions. Incorporate developmental psychology frameworks into studies to understand how social media affects self-esteem across different stages of adolescence, considering factors like identity formation and peer influence. Develop and implement digital literacy programs that integrate psychological concepts, teaching adolescents how to critically evaluate social media content, manage online interactions, and cultivate a positive digital identity.

Practice

Foster the creation of positive and supportive online communities specifically designed for adolescents, focusing on interests, hobbies, and mental health support, where positive interactions can enhance self-esteem. Integrate social media education into school curricula and community programs, teaching adolescents about healthy social media habits, digital citizenship, and strategies for managing cyberbullying and negative content. Provide resources and workshops for parents to understand the impact of social media on adolescent self-esteem, empowering them to guide their children in using social media responsibly and promoting healthy offline activities.

Policy

Advocate for policies that regulate social media platforms to protect adolescents from harmful content, cyberbullying, and data privacy violations, while promoting transparency and ethical practices. Allocate resources and funding for mental health support services that specifically address the psychological impact of social media on adolescents, including counseling, online support groups, and crisis intervention. Foster collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, mental health professionals, and technology companies to develop evidence-based guidelines and interventions that mitigate the negative impact of social media on adolescent self-esteem.

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