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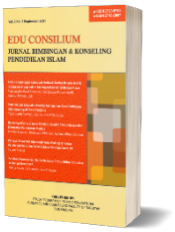

Mirror of the Self: Exploring the Effect of Self-Esteem and Narcissism on Social Media Addiction Among College Students

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Keywords:
Social Media Addiction;
Self-Esteem;
Narcissim.

Abstract

Social media addiction is a significant issue that can impact an individual's mental health. This study aims to analyze the influence of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction. Utilizing a quantitative approach with a correlational survey design, 65 participants were selected through Convenience sampling. Data were collected using scales for self-esteem, narcissism, and social media addiction, and were analyzed through simple and multiple regression analyses. The results revealed a partial negative effect of both self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction. Additionally, the simultaneous testing confirmed a significant combined effect of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction. This study highlights the importance of implementing counseling services to address social media addiction. Future research is recommended to explore the complex interactions between narcissism, self-esteem, and social media use in greater depth and to develop more effective strategies for mitigating their negative impacts.

Kata Kunci:
Kecanduan Media Sosial;
Harga Diri;
Narsisme.

Abstrak:

Kecanduan media sosial merupakan masalah serius yang dapat memengaruhi kesehatan mental individu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh harga diri dan narsisme terhadap kecanduan media sosial. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan desain survei korelasional. Penelitian ini melibatkan 65 orang sebagai responden yang ditentukan dengan teknik *Convenience sampling*. Data dikumpulkan melalui skala harga diri, skala narsisme, serta skala kecanduan media sosial, selanjutnya dianalisis menggunakan analisis regresi sederhana dan berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya pengaruh negatif secara parsial harga diri dan narsisme terhadap kecanduan media sosial. Selain itu pengujian secara simultan juga memverifikasi pengaruh yang signifikan harga diri dan narsisme secara bersama-sama terhadap kecanduan media sosial. Studi ini memiliki implikasi terkait pentingnya implementasi layanan konseling untuk mengatasi permasalahan kecanduan media sosial. Disarankan agar penelitian berikutnya menyelidiki lebih dalam mengenai interaksi kompleks antara narsisme, harga diri, dan penggunaan media sosial, serta mengembangkan strategi yang lebih efektif untuk mengurangi dampak negatifnya.

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Introduction

The proliferation of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok provides rapid access to information, entertainment, and easy social interaction, encouraging users to remain constantly connected and engaged (Haenlein et al., 2020). This excessive connectedness can lead to social media addiction, where individuals feel compelled to continually check for updates, seek "likes" or comments, and participate in excessive online activities. Seeing the gradual emergence of social media as a human right, led many people to spend more time with their own social media accounts by using the accounts they already had, which caused many people to become desperate for only being able to express themselves (Jani & Weismann, 2021). The symptoms of this addiction are often characterized by decreased productivity, sleep disturbances, increased anxiety, and negative impacts on mental health and social relationships (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017; Pellegrino et al., 2022). This phenomenon represents a significant shift in human lifestyles and behavior that necessitates serious attention and intervention.

Social media addiction presents significant risks to individuals, particularly university students, affecting various aspects of their lives (Sujadi & Ahmad, 2023). Research has identified several key factors contributing to social media addiction and its associated risks. Social media addiction has been linked to negative outcomes such as decreased sleep quality, cognitive impairment, increased risk of harassment, abuse, and privacy invasion, all of which can heighten psychological distress and suicide risk (Wang et al., 2022). Additionally, it is associated with depression, compromised mental health, and feelings of social isolation (Santini et al., 2024; Sheldon et al., 2021). Excessive use of social media can exacerbate loneliness, contribute to depressive symptoms, and adversely impact overall mental health. Furthermore, social media addiction can lead to poor academic performance, impaired decision-making, and disrupted work-life balance (Kocak et al., 2023; Zaw & Azenal, 2021). Negative effects that can also be caused by social media include online harassment (cyberbullying), sexting, depression, and arranged marriages. Using social media during adolescence can also contribute to moral decay, as interactions and communication deteriorate and delinquency and behavior decrease such as acts of crime and fighting (Aprilia et al., 2020). College students may experience challenges such as diminished academic performance, increased procrastination, and difficulty balancing academic responsibilities with social media use (Lestari et al., 2024).

Akther found that a significant percentage of university students exhibited symptoms of social media addiction, leading to compulsive use, withdrawal symptoms, and various negative consequences associated with their social media engagement (Akther, 2023). Similarly, Awopetu emphasized that the increasing prominence of social media in college students' social lives exposes them to a higher risk of addiction, which can be detrimental to their mental health (Awopetu et al., 2024). Additionally, research by Wei demonstrated that social media addiction significantly encroaches on students' study time, resulting in decreased academic performance and negatively affecting learning outcomes (Wei, 2023). This finding is supported by Alvi et al. who investigated the direct impact of social media addiction on academic performance and student engagement (Alvi et al., 2022). Moreover, studies by Zaw & Azenal et al. revealed that social media addiction is negatively associated with both mental health and academic performance among university students (Zaw & Azenal, 2021).

Students commonly use mobile phones to access social media, which has become popular for education, entertainment, and communication (Wickramanayake & Muhammad Jika, 2018).

However, numerous survey results indicate that social media addiction is prevalent among university students. A study of 5,961 students using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) reported that 4.5% of students had increased social media use (Bányai et al., 2017). Grau et al. found that social media may be present in some respondents in the near-addiction phase or social media addiction phase (Grau et al., 2019). Furthermore, a survey in Turkey illustrates that there are students who experience social media addiction even though it is generally categorized as low (Afacan & Ozbek, 2019). Furthermore, a survey of 700 high school students and students in college revealed they experienced moderate social media addiction (Simsek et al., 2019). Surely addiction of social media users is not allowed as it unfairly harms users in a demeaning and exploitative way that is unpleasant (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2021).

The factors influencing social media addiction among college students are multifaceted, encompassing various psychological, social, and behavioral aspects. Research by Javed and Jaffar Akther identified key factors such as the need for social validation, boredom, and peer pressure as major contributors to social media addiction in this population (Akther, 2023). This underscores the significant role of social influence and psychological needs in driving excessive social media use. Additionally, several studies suggest that self-esteem is a critical factor in social media addiction among college students. Specifically, individuals with lower life satisfaction and higher self-esteem are more susceptible to social media addiction, indicating a link between self-perception and addictive behavior (Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Xuan & Amat, 2021). Self-esteem is one of the important elements for the formation of a person's self-concept and will have a broad impact on his attitude and behavior (Putra et al., 2022). According to Rosenberg's (Rosenberg, 2011) view, two things that play a role in the formation of self-esteem (confidence), are reflected evaluations and social comparisons (social examinations). Those with low self-esteem are thought to be prone to depression, drug use, and violence. High self-esteem helps to increase initiative, resilience, and feelings of fulfillment (Baumeister et al., 2003). To put it another way, high self-esteem is associated with a positive mental state that makes it easier for people to interact with one another. A person with high self-esteem (confidence) is said to have high resilience, which is having the ability to bounce back, by overcoming the pressure experienced. However, a person with high self-esteem can experience failure or disappointment which makes their self-esteem decrease. This condition is known as threatened self-esteem. In this context, self-esteem can be a source of stress. This threat to self-esteem (confidence) then gives rise to a self-defense reaction, which according to Heatherton and Vohs (Heatherton & Vohs, 2000).

Another factor influencing social media addiction is narcissism (Casale & Banchi, 2020). Narcissism, in a negative connotation, occurs when an individual perceives themselves as excessively self-confident, and this self-confidence is manifested through distinctive behaviors. The individual believes they possess greater intelligence and potential than others, leading them to struggle with accepting themselves for behaviors that exaggerate their abilities and actual circumstances (Sujadi, 2022). Narcissism can significantly influence social media addiction, as narcissistic traits and characteristics often drive behaviors centered on seeking attention and recognition from others. Individuals with narcissistic tendencies typically have a high need for self-validation and social recognition, which can be reinforced through interactions on social media (Andreassen et al., 2017). Social media can be used to identify characteristics of narcissistic behavior (Dalila et al., 2021). Research indicates that high levels of narcissism are frequently associated with excessive social media use and compulsive behavior in online interactions, which can ultimately result in negative impacts on mental health and social well-being (Lyvers et al., 2022).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of narcissism and self-esteem on social media addiction behavior. This research makes a significant contribution to understanding the impact of narcissism and self-esteem on social media addiction, with a specific focus on the context of Indonesian university students. While several studies have examined the effects of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction, this study addresses a crucial gap by exploring the simultaneous influence of both factors within an integrated model. The main novelty of this study

lies in its comprehensive analysis of how narcissism and self-esteem jointly affect social media addiction, particularly within the unique social and cultural context of Indonesian university students, which may differ from other populations. This approach provides deeper and more detailed insights into the complex interactions between these two psychological factors and their contributions to social media addiction behavior. The findings from this research can enhance understanding of how psychological factors such as narcissism and self-esteem influence social media addiction, thereby aiding in the identification of high-risk individuals. By elucidating the relationship between narcissism, self-esteem, and social media addiction, this study can inform the development of more effective intervention strategies and prevention programs aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of social media addiction among college students.

Method

This study employs the survey method, a data collection approach utilizing questionnaires and interviews with human subjects. Data collection took place over a three-week period in April 2024. Employing a convenience sampling technique, 65 students from the Faculty of Economics and Islamic Business at a university in Jambi Province, Indonesia, participated in completing the online-distributed scale. The initial page sought respondents' willingness to participate, followed by sections for personal identification, variables, demographics, and questionnaire responses. The demographic profile of the participants is outlined in Table 1.

Table1. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Batch/Semester	2023/I	8	12,7
	2022/III	27	42,9
	2021/V	15	23,8
	2020/VII	10	12,9
	2019/IX	3	4,6
	2018/XI	2	3,2
Gender	Male	33	50,8%
	Female	32	49,2%
GPA	>3.50	57	87,7%
	<3.50	8	12,3%
Length of time used in a day	< 3 hours	29	44,6%
to access the internet	3 - 5 hours	20	30,8%
	5-7 hours	7	10,8%
	>7 hours	9	13,8%
Living area	Urban	33	50,8%
	Rural	32	49,2%

Table 1 illustrates that the characteristics of 2023/I batch/semester are 8 people or 12.7%, 2022/III there are 27 people or 42.9%, 2021/V there are 15 people or 23.8%, 2020/VIII there are 10 people or 12.9%, 2019/IX there are 1 people or 1.6%, and 2018/XI there are 2 people or 3.2%. Furthermore, the respondents who participated in the survey were mostly male, namely 33 people or 50.8%, followed by 32 women or 49.2%. Furthermore, based on GPA> 3.50 there are 57 people or 87.7%, < 3.50 there are 8 people or 12.3%. Furthermore, based on the characteristics of the time used to access the internet a day via a smartphone, those who use smartphones in the <3 hour range is dominated by 29 people or 44.6%, followed by 3-5 hours for as many as 20 people or 30.8%, 5-7 hours for as many as 7 people or 10.8%, and >7 hours for as many as 9 people or 13.8%. Then for the area of residence in the city as many as 33 people or 50.8%, and in the village as many as 32 or 49.2%.

There are several research scales used in this study. The researchers employed the social media addiction level scale developed by Cengiz Sahin (Şahin, 2019). This scale comprises 21 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (4 = never, 3 = sometimes, 2 = often, 1 = always). Internal consistency and validity were examined using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.911. Upon reevaluation, the researcher confirmed internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.937. Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 2011). The self-esteem scale, crafted by Rosenberg, comprises 10 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree,4 = strongly disagree). Content validity guided the selection of the final set of ten questions. The scale demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.911, affirming both concurrent validity and internal consistency. Furthermore, the researchers utilized the narcissistic scale developed by Joshua et al., encompassing 35 items evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). Internal consistency was assessed via Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of 0.937 upon reassessment.

Furthermore, to assess the participants' performance on each variable, this study employed descriptive statistics encompassing mean, standard deviation, and percentage analyses Hypotheses were then evaluated using simple regression and multiple regression techniques, which reveal the relationship between dependent variables and factors influencing more than one independent variable (Hartati et al., 2020). Prerequisites for regression analysis, such as normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity, were thoroughly examined. The research utilized the SPSS version 25.00 software for data analysis.

Result

Data processing in this investigation commenced with descriptive analysis to assess the performance of each variable. Table 2 presents the outcomes of this processing. For the self-esteem variable, an average of 28.8 and a standard deviation of 4.34 were computed, indicating a moderate level. Respondents were predominantly in the moderate range, followed by low, very low, high, and very high classifications, suggesting the presence of students with low self-esteem levels In terms of theistic variable, respondents were clustered in the high category with an average of 74.66. While most respondents fell into the low category, 6.15% exhibited high levels of narcissism. The social media addiction variable was predominantly categorized as moderate; however, an examination of the frequency distribution revealed students classified as high or even very high in this regard.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Mean (SD)	Level (%)				
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Self-esteem	28,8 (4,34)	0 (0)	1 (1,63)	37 (56,9)	15 (23,0)	12 (18,4)
Narcissistic	74,66(16,87)	8 (12,30)	27 (41,53)	23 (35,38)	4 (6,15)	1 (1,53)
Social media addiction	50,21(16,00)	21 (32,30)	7 (10,76)	9 (13,84)	25 (38,46)	3 (3,61)

Furthermore, as we have explained in the methods section, several requirements must be met to conduct regression testing, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Table 3 illustrates the results of these tests. In normality testing, the significance value of the self-esteem variable is 0.000, the significance value of the narcissistic variable is 0.200, and the significance of the social media addiction variable is 0.000, so it is stated that all data tested are normally distributed. In multicollinearity testing, the VIF value of 1,176 < 10 was obtained so that there was no multicollinearity between variables. Furthermore, heteroscedasticity testing on the religiosity variable resulted in a significance of 0.000 and perfectionism of 0.059, so it was concluded that no heteroscedasticity occurred.

Table 3. Classical Assumptions

Classical Assumptions	Sig.	Decision
Normality test for self-esteem	0.103 > 0.05	Normally distributed
Normality test for narcissism	0.200 > 0.05	Normally distributed
Normality test for social media addiction	0.127 > 0.05	Normally distributed
Multicollinearity	1.176*	No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity test for self-esteem variables	0.000**	No Heteroscedasticity
Heteroscedasticity test for narcissism variables	0.009**	No Heteroscedasticity

* Nilai *Tolerance*
** *Glejser*

Following the assessments in Table 3, all analytical criteria have been satisfied. Subsequently, researchers proceeded with hypothesis testing employing simple regression to delineate the partial impact of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction, and multiple regression to unveil their joint influence. Table 4 details these analyses. The regression examination in Table 4 focuses on the impact of self-esteem on social media addiction. It displays a substantial t-value of -4.687 with a significance of 0.000, indicating a noteworthy effect of self-esteem on social media addiction.

Table 4. Simple regression testing of self esteem on social media addiction

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
B	Std. Error	Beta		
114.547	2.571		44.557	0.000
-1.027	0.219	-0.356	-4.687	0.000

The second hypothesis tested in this study is the influence of narcissism on social media addiction, also assessed using a simple regression analysis. Table 5 presents the obtained t-value of -4.380 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a significant impact of narcissism on social media addiction.

Table 5. Simple regression testing of narcissism on social media addiction

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Std. Error		Beta		
71.353	7.194		9.918	0.000
-0.313	0.071	-0.336	-4.380	0.000

The subsequent analysis involved examining the combined impact of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction. This investigation was carried out through multiple regression analysis. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem and Narcissism on Social Media Addiction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Regression	326.435	2	163.218	5.874	.000[b]
Residual	3251.156	63	27.788		
Total	3577.592	65			

As per Table 6, the F-value is 5.874 with a significance level of 0.000. With the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), indicating significant regression coefficients, it can be inferred that both self-esteem and narcissism have an impact on social media addiction among college students.

Discussion

Self-esteem is an individual's long-term assessment of themselves (Saaduddin et al., 2023). Put simply, it reflects a person's self-perception of their value or character as narrated in their personal life story (Putri et al., 2021). Researchers have shown significant interest in exploring self-esteem to comprehend inherent self-characteristics and their interplay with crucial variables in daily life. A query for 'self-esteem' in the PsychINFO database yielded over 65,000 outcomes. Results indicated that respondents' self-esteem fell within the moderate range. Self-evaluation allows individuals to discern their self-acceptance or self-critique, along with their beliefs in their value, importance, and accomplishments. Self-esteem exerts a pivotal influence across various life domains such as work performance, psychological well-being, and academic success. Studies by Ferris et al. have demonstrated that elevated self-esteem correlates with more positive attitudes fostering heightened employee contentment and wellness (Ferris et al., 2010). Moreover, self-esteem serves as a key predictor of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement among university students (Savitri et al., 2023).

Self-esteem is a crucial factor influencing social media addiction in college students. Multiple studies have delved into the interconnection between self-esteem and social media addiction, revealing noteworthy insights. For instance, Wahyuni & Maksum introduced a research framework suggesting that gender may moderate the impact of self-esteem on social media addiction in college students, implying a gender-based variance in this relationship (Wahyuni & Maksum, 2020). Moreover, research by Yi identified a negative association between self-esteem and social media addiction among college students, signaling that lower self-esteem correlates with heightened levels of social media addiction (Chin Wei Yi & Yasmin Ahmad, 2024). Furthermore, investigations by Yaman (2023) have suggested that social media addiction could potentially trigger a decline in self-esteem levels among college students (Yaman & Yılmaz, 2024). Low self-esteem can heighten susceptibility to social media addiction by fostering a craving for external validation, promoting negative social comparisons, and fostering a predisposition to escape stress or personal challenges. Social media addiction, in turn, can compound low self-esteem, perpetuating a cycle that can be challenging to disrupt. It is vital for college students to cultivate healthy strategies to boost self-esteem and regulate their social media usage effectively.

The study also confirmed that narcissistic personality traits influence social media addiction. Narcissism entails self-evaluation where an individual regards themselves with exceptional care, holding themselves in high esteem, perceiving themselves as superior, powerful, excellent, and unmatched (Sundoro et al., 2022). Research suggests a positive correlation between narcissism and social media usage among users (Sakinah et al., 2020). Moreover, studies indicate that the frequency of social media use among students is linked to increased narcissistic tendencies, with students often seeking attention and acknowledgment through self-promoting content uploads (Saripah et al., 2023). Additionally, research has shown that social media and its content can contribute to escalating levels of narcissistic behaviors, as they influence individuals' narcissistic inclinations (Liang, 2021).

Narcissism plays a significant role in influencing social media addiction among college students, as indicated by various research studies. For instance, Gnambs & Appel conducted a meta-analysis supporting the link between social networking site engagement and narcissistic traits, indicating a propensity for individuals with such traits to display addictive behaviors in social media

use (Gnambs & Appel, 2018). Moreover, investigations like Weismann highlighted narcissism as a primary personality-related risk factor for social media addiction in student populations, suggesting that higher levels of narcissism may increase susceptibility to addictive social media behaviors (Weismann et al., 2023). In addition, Akdeniz emphasized that narcissism is a very important personality-related risk factor for social media addiction, which supports the idea that individuals with higher levels of narcissism may be more prone to developing addictive behaviors on social media platforms (AkdeniZ, 2023).

The simultaneous effect of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction was also found in several previous studies. Zurafa & Dewi identified notable impacts of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction among late adolescents, indicating a collaborative contribution of these factors to addiction (Zurafa & Dewi, 2021). Additionally, Lyvers et al. emphasized a positive correlation between narcissism and disordered social media use, indicating that narcissism could serve as a predictor for addictive behaviors related to social media (Lyvers et al., 2019). Low self-esteem can heighten susceptibility to social media addiction as individuals may seek external validation and escape from personal issues through social media. Conversely, high levels of narcissism can intensify a person's desire for attention and approval on social platforms, potentially fueling addictive behaviors. The amalgamation of low self-esteem and heightened narcissism can establish a detrimental cycle where individuals pursue emotional and psychological fulfillment through excessive social media exposure, further escalating addictive tendencies. Hence, when addressing social media addiction among college students, it is crucial to take into account both self-esteem and narcissism factors in crafting effective prevention and intervention strategies.

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, the small sample size of 65 participants may not provide enough variability to generalize the findings widely. Future research should consider involving a larger number of participants to enhance the validity and generalizability of the results. Additionally, the use of scales for self-esteem, narcissism, and social media addiction may not encompass all the intricate aspects of these constructs and could be susceptible to subjective biases. Subsequent studies should delve into the more intricate interactions among self-esteem, narcissism, and social media use for a more comprehensive understanding. Moreover, the correlational survey design being observational cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables studied. Future studies could employ a longitudinal design to track changes and evolutions in the impact of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction over time.

Conclusion

Self-esteem and narcissism were found to have a partially negative impact on social media addiction, indicating a potential role of these psychological factors in fostering addiction development. Simultaneous assessment further validated the significant influence of the combined factors of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction, illuminating the intricate interplay between these variables. This study holds significant implications for addressing social media addiction by emphasizing the enhancement of self-esteem and interventions related to narcissistic personality traits.

Counselors grasp how self-esteem and narcissism contribute partially to social media addiction to tailor counseling services appropriately for individual cases. Recognizing the detrimental effects of self-esteem and narcissism on social media addiction, counselors can formulate more targeted and efficacious prevention and intervention initiatives. For academic leaders, the provision of resources and programs supporting student well-being, including counseling services focusing on self-esteem, narcissism, and social media addiction, is paramount. These leaders should also initiate awareness campaigns highlighting the negative repercussions of social media addiction and advocating for the maintenance of a balanced media usage. The findings

also call for future research endeavors to delve deeper into the nuanced interactions among narcissism, self-esteem, and social media engagement, aiming to devise enhanced strategies to mitigate adverse effects.

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