



ISSN 1989 – 9572

DOI: 10.47750/jett.2022.13.04.017

Validation on Social Media and Adolescents: A matter of self esteem

Radhika Dhingra¹

Babita Parashar²

Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 13 (4)

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 14 July 2022

Date of revision: 15 Aug 2022

Date of acceptance: 18 Aug 2022

Radhika Dhingra, Babita Parashar (2022). Validation on Social Media and Adolescents: A matter of self esteem *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 13(4). 114 – 119.

¹Ph.D Scholar, School of Education and Humanities, Manav Rachna University

²Associate Professor, School of Education and Humanities, Manav Rachna University



Validation on Social Media and Adolescents: A matter of self esteem

Radhika Dhingra¹, Babita Parashar²

¹Ph.D Scholar, School of Education and Humanities, Manav Rachna University

²Associate Professor, School of Education and Humanities, Manav Rachna University

Email: Radhika.kr4@gmail.com¹, drbabitaparashar@gmail.com²

ABSTRACT

Children today are part of a technologically complex and advanced society. At an early age they learn to cope up with pressures and challenges of the virtual world. Seeking validation or approval is a core component of human nature. During adolescence the need for being liked plays a critical role as it enhances child's self-confidence. Comparing ourselves with others and the need for being liked has been there since time immemorial.

Adolescence is a transitional phase of life as well as crucial phase where changes take place at all levels (Physical, emotional, and psychological). In this phase of rapid growth and development a child needs validation for his social, emotional, and physical developments. Last decade has seen mushrooming of social networking sites. Social networking sites have two salient features: acceptance and interpersonal feedback. A considerable amount of time spent on social media is on seeking validation. Teenagers share pictures, stories, funny videos, articles educational videos, informative blogpost to validate their thought process, viewpoint, opinions, and physical appearance. Social media is playing a pivotal role in shaping their personality and adding to their social emotional learning.

This article contributes to the ongoing discourse in the area of social media usage and need for validation for adolescents and its implications on self-esteem. It would be interesting to find out if social networking sites/ social media has become instrumental for enhancing self-esteem and has it aggravated the need for being liked, popular, famous and has social media validation supported social esteem in adolescents.

Keywords: Social emotional learning, social media, self esteem, adolescents, validation

INTRODUCTION

According to the pattern of Internet usage in India (Trifiro & Gerson, 2019), youth is spending a significant time on internet. According to the report, an alarming majority of youth is spending more than 5 hours on social media. More than 80 percent of young people use social media in their online hours. Social media is used as an effective communication tool through videos/ images/ shared information virtual world is a connected place with real and reel time exchange of information. As a significant majority of youth on internet falls under the age bracket of (12 to 18 years) it is of important to find out how the young generation is using social media to its advantage.

Adolescence can be divided into three phases of major developments. Early adolescence is marked by accepting the changes in body. In the Mid adolescence there is a sort of separation from the family, at this age children tend to hold friends closer than family. They confide in friends, get validated from them. Late adolescence is very critical for identity formation. Achieving an appropriate dependence-interdependence pattern, affectional pattern, a sense of belongingness and acquiring an appropriate orientation. Also, developing skills, intellect, concepts, a sense of conscience, morality and value system are a part of few important developmental task during Adolescence. There is strong need to adapt within the complex psychosocial system (Remschmidt, 1375).

Many researchers have found out that during late adolescents, individuals develop the ability to stand by certain beliefs and values that include personal choices and moral standards. Multiple social factors are also related to the change in the way they view themselves. There is more scope for social comparison as children grow older, there are multiple social factors related to changes in self-belief and more experiences in multiple context which shapes their esteem (Jacobs, 2003).

Adolescents, social media, and self esteem

Early and middle adolescents is symbolised by an increased attention on self. Adolescents tend to have an imaginative audience who approve or disapprove of their behaviour. They are preoccupied by others opinion about them and constantly put themselves under scanner or scrutiny for self-approval. Others perception of them truly make a difference to their self-esteem and wellbeing. There is growing evidence that adolescents' self-esteem is impacted by the kind of feedback they receive on their social profiles. From this study it was found out that most adolescents (78 %) received positive feedback on their profiles and only (7 %) received negative feedback. For the ones who received negative feedback, social networking site had an adverse impact on their personality. (P. M. Valkenburg et al., 2006)

Acquiring self-esteem is an important developmental task during adolescents. From the study we found out that adolescents irrespective of the fact that they are positive suspects to social media, negative suspects, or neutral suspects – everybody irrespective to their social media experience get trapped in social media induced drops in self-esteem (P. Valkenburg et al., 2021).

We cannot deny that social media has become an indispensable part of young people's life. A study done on subjective experience of young people on social media emphasized how behaviours and cognitions in adolescents significantly impact their mental health. As we know that physical appearance is a critical phenomenon during growing up years, adolescents spend hours in capturing the perfect look or filtering a picture so that they can come picture perfect and flawless to their social media imaginary audience. Social media and its high level of accessibility, public view, permanence can have negative affect on adolescents' psychological development (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020).

A systematic narrative review revealed contradictory evidence regarding the use of social media on adolescents (Best et al., 2014). A growing body of evidence suggest that teens get supportive online environment whereas other considerable body of evidence suggest that there is a negative relationship between online communication and wellbeing. As far as social media technology and well being is concerned it suggest that factors like 'time spent' or 'number of friends/followers' doesn't define the online experience but the online activity one engages in is more suggestive to the whole online experience.

Another study done by (Wilson et al., 2010) states that extroverts spend more time on social networking sites. The internet provides something distinctive that draws attention of the extroverts. Young people use social networking sites to confirm their self-worth as they receive constant positive feedback from others. Extroversion was found to be associated with addictive tendencies, suggesting that extroverts may turn out to be completely dependent on SNS because the interactive experience meets their need for stimulation and social interaction. Low scores on consciousness significantly predict addictive tendencies. It is plausible to assume that unconscious people tend to lack self-control.

Literature Review

Self Esteem and Adolescence

Self-esteem has significant impact on one's life. Its about how we view ourselves and it is formed alongside childhood and adulthood.

(Blattner et al., 2013) Studied the role of parents and effects on self esteem among female adolescents. The research was conducted on 207 girl students from sixth, eighth and tenth grade. Finding from the study indicates that a commitment to finding your purpose during adolescent is positively associated with self-esteem.

Self-esteem is a very critical component of growing up. Parental alienation decreases self-esteem but increases the self-purpose. Adolescents in their growing up years need support from multiple sources such as peers, teachers and parents and a constant support helps them with Positive youth development.

Another research done by (Darjan et al., 2020) states that adolescents with strong self-esteem tend to have regular healthy interactions in their growing up years, while adolescents with low self-esteem are prone to victimisation. 83 adolescents were assessed on scales pertaining to self-esteem, level of assertiveness and a self-report questionnaire. Adolescents who are involved in bullying have lower self-esteem than those who do not. There is a positive correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness. Positive interactions during adolescents result in speaking your mind, communicating openly, and managing conflict. The study highlights the importance of peers, parents and teachers, counsellors in nurturing healthy self esteem and social skills in children. For children to have a positive self-esteem and attain personal objective in life aggressive, hurtful, humiliating interactions should be avoided during adolescence.

Psychosocial wellbeing is the perception of mattering to others. (Marshall, 2001) created MTOQ (Mattering to others Questionnaire). Perceived Mattering was checked on various constructs like gender/ age, and/or source. Perceived mattering was checked in relation to self-esteem, individual's sense of relatedness and sense of purpose. Also, parenting behaviour and interactions with friends.

The result of the analysis suggest that self esteem and perceived mattering are distinct yet related concepts. Self-esteem is a significant indicator of psychosocial wellbeing. With both parents and peers, positive attention and perceived mattering have a high corelation as compared to negative attention and perceived mattering. As

expected, peer rejection is negatively associated with perceived mattering. We can safely assume that for the psychosocial well-being during adolescents it is important for children to perceive themselves valuable for their parents and peers.

Social media, Self-esteem, and Adolescents

A survey was conducted among 881 adolescents from Netherlands (10-19 years) who had an online profile on a Dutch friend networking site. A website named CU2 contained 4,15,000 profiles. A uniformed equation model gave weightage to the growing evidence that the frequency with which adolescents use the site had an indirect effect on their social self-esteem and wellbeing. Social networking site has the potential to influence adolescents' self-esteem and wellbeing (P. M. Valkenburg et al., 2006).

A systematic review of journals published between January 2003 and April 2013, retrieved the benefits and detriments of online communication, social media, and adolescent wellbeing (Best et al., 2014). Benefits included opportunities for self-disclosure, increased self-esteem, and a sense of support from the virtual world whereas the downside of it would have factors like social isolation, cyber bullying, body shaming, depressive symptoms cannot be ignored. Online social networking had mixed reviews, it was seen both negative and positive side. Benefit of online social networking is that it raises a sense of belongingness and self esteem which would have an impact on the overall wellbeing. Self-disclosure becomes easier with empathetic and emotional support via online medium.

During adolescents' lot of factors contribute to self-esteem. There is an incessant need for validation. One of the research projects contributed to the development and validation of the appearance related social media consciousness scale. From the use of 13 – item scale in assessing appearance related social media consciousness it was found out that for both boys and girls higher ASMC (Appearance related social media consciousness) score was associated with depressive symptoms. Disorders relating to eating among girls were also related to high ASMC score (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020). During this tender age, young people are excessively concerned about how they look, and they are driven to present themselves attractively to their social media audience. They equate physical attractiveness with self-worth and their need for validation is contingent on cultural standard of beauty, adolescents have to abide by the undue virtual pressure to look a certain way.

Another study done by Karthryn Wilson predicted the addictive tendencies between 17 to 24 years old with the help of NEO Five Factor personality inventory and the Coopersmith Self Esteem inventory (Wilson et al., 2010). Participants who were spending higher time on SNS were reported to be high on extroversion and low on consciousness. From the results one can postulate that extroversion is a positive predictor and consciousness is a negative predictor, of both time spent using SNS and SNS addictive tendencies.

Study on the need for social recognition via internet (Balleys et al., 2020), Youtube is the most popular audio-visual platform. For teenagers it's a tool for participation, connection, education, support, learning and dissemination. One of the relevant findings that arise from the twofold analysis of the production and reception of YouTube videos by teenagers is that the search for social recognition involves a shared sense of intimacy. The content of the videos on YouTube is relatable to the young generation and they identify themselves with the youtuber. The youtubers know the nerve of the generation, they touch upon topics that connect with teenagers, they talk in their tone, and language. Teenagers who express themselves through YouTube and who watch them are a part of the youth socialisation process which helps them in Identity affiliation. The medium of interaction has changed but the basic need to connect with people remains the same over generations. The research termed it as the need to have "intimate confessional production format". It reinforces the bond.

Another study developed a scale to examine the outside and inside social media behaviour of secondary school students in Hong Kong. Data was collected from 814 students, and it was found out that although the use of social media is multidimensional in nature but certain behavioural patterns while using technology remain the same irrespective of the fact whether social media is being used outside or inside school setting (Lu et al., 2019). Social media behaviour is significantly correlated with each other. From this study it was clear that use of technology inside school can be used as a first step in harnessing engagement in learning of students.

(Jan et al., 2017) tested two hypothesis. One stated that there is no relationship between social media and self-esteem. The other stated that there is a relationship between social media and self-esteem. 150 students were surveyed through questionnaires and interviews. The result of the study indicated that there is a strong relationship between social media usage and self-esteem of individuals. Increased social media usage is not good for the self-esteem. As we spend more time on social networking sites we start comparing our life with the lives of other people, comparison takes place on the information given on the profile. Based on which one tends to feel inferior with other person likes on the profile. These negative feelings have a direct impact on self-esteem. Social networking sites propels social comparison which is not good in the long run as it hampers one's self-confidence.

DISCUSSION

Adolescence is a tricky phase as the need for acceptance, validation, and fear of rejection plays an important part in every teenager's life. Becoming an adult comes with its own set of trials and tribulations. The challenge of this phase includes body shaming, bullying, lack of self-esteem which leads to low confidence, stress, and depression. There is a dire need for positive interaction and feedback for children to blossom typically at this stage when changes are taking place at every level – physical, mental, and emotional. At this tender age, others' opinions about themselves really matter. Adolescents seek acceptance and approval in both real and virtual world.

With the advent of social media and mushrooming of social networking sites there is a humongous percentage of adolescents who have grown up using internet. They have been immersed in technology where at an early age they have thriving social networking presence which makes them more susceptible to social scrutiny and social comparison. Recent studies indicate that factors like time spent on social networking sites and lack of control adds to addictive tendencies in children.

The young impressionable mind is exposed to every kind of information, and at times social media can induce a drop in their self-esteem. Self-esteem is a critical component alongside adolescence and adulthood. Positive self-esteem is an indicator of psychosocial wellbeing. Self-esteem is given to us by our immediate environment which includes family, parents, peers, teachers, counsellors. Nowadays with adolescents spending so much time on social media, social networking sites impacts adolescents' self-esteem and wellbeing.

High self-esteem is positively related to assertiveness. It is related to open communication, speaking your mind whereas low self-esteem leads to an attack on one's self worth. The kind of comments on social media profile have a profound impact. On one hand a supportive online environment enhances well-being. It provides a sense of belongingness, empathetic and emotional support. It makes easier for the adolescents to confide and provide them with a secure environment. Studies have also proven that mindful use of the medium can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

On the other hand, a discouraging environment can have adverse effects. It leads to social comparison, social scrutiny. It can have a negative impact on self-esteem which leads to more episodes of cyber bullying, body shaming and hampers overall personality development. Appearance related social media consciousness is also associated with depressive symptoms and indicates how validation on appearance plays critical role in defining self-esteem.

Healthy self-esteem is an essential part of adolescents' upbringing. More research in this area should highlight the positive use of social media. As we know that social media has become an integral part of adolescents' life so if there is a way in which they can use the medium to their advantage.

REFERENCES

1. Balleys, C., Millerand, F., Thoër, C., & Duque, N. (2020). Searching for Oneself on YouTube: Teenage Peer Socialization and Social Recognition Processes. *Social Media and Society*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120909474>
2. Best, P., Manktelow, R., & Taylor, B. (2014). Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41(June), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.001>
3. Blattner, M. C. C., Liang, B., Lund, T., & Spencer, R. (2013). Searching for a sense of purpose : The role of parents and effects on self-esteem among female adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36(5), 839–848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.06.008>
4. Choukas-Bradley, S., Nesi, J., Widman, L., & Galla, B. M. (2020). The Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale: Development and validation with adolescents. *Body Image*, 33, 164–174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.02.017>
5. Darjan, I., Negru, M., & Dan, I. (2020). Self-esteem – the decisive difference between bullying and asertiveness in adolescence? *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 41(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.35923/jes.2020.1.02>
6. Jacobs, J. E. B. M. M. C. M. J. (2003). The self system during childhood and adolescence: Development, influences, and implications. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 33–65.
7. Jan, M., Soomro, S. A., & Ahmad, N. (2017). Impact of Social Media on Self-Esteem. *European Scientific Journal*, ESJ, 13(23), 329. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2017.v13n23p329>
8. Lu, J., Luo, J., Liang, L., & Jing, M. (2019). Measuring Adolescents' Social Media Behavior Outside and Inside of School: Development and Validation of Two Scales. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 57(5), 1108–1130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633118786851>
9. Marshall, S. K. (2001). Do i matter? Construct validation of adolescents' perceived mattering to parents and friends. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24(4), 473–490.

<https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2001.0384>

10. Remschmidt, H. (1375). Psychosocial Milestones in Normal Puberty and Adolescence.
11. Trifiro, B. M., & Gerson, J. (2019). Social Media Usage Patterns: Research Note Regarding the Lack of Universal Validated Measures for Active and Passive Use. *Social Media + Society*, 5(2), 205630511984874. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119848743>
12. Valkenburg, P., Beyens, I., Pouwels, J. L., Van Driel, I. I., & Keijsers, L. (2021). Social Media Use and Adolescents' Self-Esteem: Heading for a Person-Specific Media Effects Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 71(1), 56–78. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa039>
13. Valkenburg, P. M., Peter, J., & Schouten, A. P. (2006). Friend networking sites and their relationship to adolescents' well-being and social self-esteem. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 9(5), 584–590. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2006.9.584>
14. Wilson, K., Fornasier, S., & White, K. M. (2010). Psychological Predictors of Young Adults' Use of Social Networking Sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 13(2), 173–177. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2009.0094>