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The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem in the Relationship Between Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction: A Study of WhatsApp Users

Abstract: *This research aimed to understand how self-esteem influences the connection between social media use and satisfaction. The research centred on how people utilize WhatsApp as a social networking platform. In this study, we looked at how often people use WhatsApp and how that correlates with how satisfied they are in general. 255 people who regularly use social media were surveyed on their habits, self-esteem, level of satisfaction with life, and other factors. Using structural equation modelling, the data were examined. According to the results, self-esteem moderated the positive association between social media use and contentment. This study underlines the moderating influence of self-esteem between social media use and life satisfaction. To further understand the beneficial impacts of social media use on psychological health, future research should focus on activity theory and the concept of a sense of mastery.*

Key Words: WhatsApp use, Self-esteem, Social Media use, Life Satisfaction

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Introduction

The rise of social media has enabled people to interact with one another virtually. About eight hours a day are spent online, mostly on social networking sites. The use of social media to make and maintain connections with people who matter to us. Perhaps no one at the time of the Internet's creation foresaw its immense importance. Sharing knowledge has never been easier. More social media means more chances for people to talk to one another,

which strengthens relationships. Teenagers today are required to maintain profiles on many social media platforms. There is a wide variety of motivations for social media use, but for most people, it's a source of pleasure or amusement.

Pleasure can be considered an essential component of happiness. Socializing with friends and connecting with partners in the same hedonic mood may also provide pleasure. Happiness may thus be defined as

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the existence of happy feelings, the absence of negative feelings, and as a vital element of life satisfaction (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021).

A person's level of contentment with life can be assessed in terms of their general happiness or regarding single or several facets of their existence (Diener, et al., 1999). How well one's life meets one's own standards (not imposed from elsewhere) and one's attitude toward the present may be indicators of one's level of satisfaction (Diener, et al., 1985). It exemplifies a critical conceptual examination of one's own life (Özdevecioğlu & Aktaş, 2007). It's also a sign of how one feels about his or her life (Veenhoven, 1991). It's possible, therefore, that a person's level of life satisfaction is a kind of value judgment (Pavot & Diener, 2013).

Positive relationships, happiness-inducing subjective pleasure (Kahneman et al., 1999), and having a sense of purpose in life all contribute to what Cowen (1991) calls "mental well-being" (Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005). There is no one thing that makes a person happy. Instead, happiness comes from a lot of small things that add up to big things like being satisfied with life and feeling connected to other people (Kringelbach & Berridge, 2010). Hyvarinen and Beck (2018) say that emotions are a key part of how people interact with each other (Wakefield & Wakefield, 2016). Happiness, sadness, fear or surprise, and anger or disgust are the four main emotions that make up a person's emotional health (Beck, 2014). The main parts are feelings, thoughts, and other mental states. As with face-to-face communication, expressing your emotions online is easy (Gruzd, et al., 2011). Participation in social media activities can assist enhance both one's emotional and social well-being (Burke, et al., 2010).

In particular, the act of engaging in social media use triggers the discharge of neurochemicals that in turn make the user feel good and provide them joy. The release of these hormones is triggered by a variety of factors, including just surfing and receiving good responses in the form of likes, comments, and shares. These seemingly little exchanges may provide great satisfaction to a couple's

relationship if they take the time to appreciate one another. Improvements in people's mental health have been related to the unique ability of social media platforms to bring people together. Feelings of joy and satisfaction are only two outcomes of a life rich in relationships. Like other forms of social media, Facebook has become an indispensable part of many people's life, serving as a medium of communication and self-expression. Its widespread acceptance may be attributed to the fact that it facilitates the fulfilment of core social needs and contributes to the development of meaningful connections between individuals. Social requirements are met on Facebook, as it allows for many types of communication, as stated by Sheldon et al. (2011). (i.e., online friendships, personal relationships, etc.). Individuals are motivated to interact with others on the platform by their desire to fulfil their information needs and showcase their identities (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). (Park, et al., 2009).

As online activities come to take precedence over face-to-face interactions, social dysfunction sets in. The line between social networking and social disorder is fine yet noticeable. When there are positive outcomes from social networking, social dysfunction can have an impact on psychological health. When their mental health is in jeopardy, many Internet users feel compelled to escape into a virtual world where they may experience the same sense of imagination and pleasure that they're missing out on in the real world.

Self-esteem and Social Media

Self-esteem is a multifaceted concept that has been explored and described by a variety of scholars over time. According to James (1890), an individual's self-esteem is influenced by their success and expectations. This means that if a person achieves their goals and has high expectations for themselves, they are more likely to have a positive view of themselves, leading to high self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) described self-esteem as a person's evaluation of their own worth. This evaluation is based on an individual's perception of their abilities,

achievements, and characteristics. Furthermore, Coopersmith (1967) argued that a person's perception of their own competence, value, and significance constitutes self-esteem. This perception is shaped by their experiences and interactions with others, which can either positively or negatively affect their self-esteem. Similarly, Branden (2001) defined self-esteem as a combination of self-confidence and self-respect, which is a sense of personal value and competence. In this sense, self-esteem is not just about feeling good about oneself but also about having the confidence and ability to achieve one's goals. Moreover, Balat and Akman (2004) suggested that self-respect is an evaluation of the information included in a person's self-concept. The sum of a person's views, attitudes, and values about oneself is their self-concept. Therefore, having a positive self-concept is crucial for maintaining healthy self-esteem. It is influenced by various factors such as success, expectations, personal worth, competence, and self-concept. Understanding these factors and how they relate to self-esteem can help individuals maintain a positive sense of self and achieve their full potential.

But the rise of social media has changed the way people perceive and evaluate themselves, which can have a significant impact on their self-esteem. Social media platforms allow individuals to present an idealized version of themselves, which may not necessarily reflect their true selves. As a result, people often compare themselves to others on social media, leading to unrealistic expectations and negative feelings about themselves. For example, individuals may feel inferior or inadequate when comparing their accomplishments, looks, and lifestyle to those of others on social media. This can lead to a decline in their self-esteem as they begin to doubt their own abilities and worth. In some cases, individuals may feel pressure to maintain an online persona that aligns with their followers' expectations, leading to a sense of inauthenticity and anxiety. Furthermore, social media can also expose individuals to cyberbullying and negative comments, which can harm their self-esteem. Online trolling and

hate speech may have a substantial influence on a person's self-worth and self-perception.

But social networking sites may be used positively to encourage healthy connections that align with positive mental health and the pursuit of enjoyment without suffering. Happiness-seeking is a normal part of life. One's level of happiness has a direct correlation to their level of sociability and activity. Subjective and emotional fulfilment can be sustained throughout the time when happiness is not predicated solely on fleeting gratifications. Communication strategies that use social media for mutually beneficial endorsement and balanced participation constantly aim for and promote such an attunement. It contributes to a person's overall happiness and well-being by removing any negative emotions.

In short, when it comes to self-esteem, social media can be both good and bad. It gives people a place to share their thoughts and connect with others, but it can also lead to negative comparisons and high expectations. As a result, it is critical for people to have a healthy relationship with social media and be conscious of how it impacts their self-esteem.

Life Satisfaction, Self-esteem, and Social Media

Research has shown that life satisfaction (Doğan & Eryılmaz, 2013) and self-esteem (Appleton & Song, 2008) are important factors that contribute to an individual's overall well-being. Life satisfaction is the degree to which an individual is satisfied with their life, while self-esteem is a measure of how positively (Freire & Ferreira, 2019; Rey, et al., 2011) or negatively (Seshadri, et al., 2020) one views oneself. Both factors have been found to be influenced by various factors, including social media use.

A person's level of contentment with life can be assessed in terms of their general happiness or regarding single or several facets of their existence (Diener, et al., 1999). How well one's life meets one's own standards (not imposed from elsewhere) and one's attitude toward the present may be indicators of one's

level of satisfaction (Diener, et al., [1985](#)). It exemplifies a critical conceptual examination of one's own life (Özdevecioğlu & Aktaş, [2007](#)). It's also a sign of how one feels about his or her life (Veenhoven, [1991](#)). It's possible, therefore, that a person's level of life satisfaction is a kind of value judgment (Pavot & Diener, [2013](#)).

Even though social media is widely used nowadays, studies have shown that it may have both beneficial and detrimental impacts on one's mental health. Yet, the positive effects of social media use on happiness and self-esteem are two-sided. Conversely, there are negative outcomes associated with social media use that can have an impact on one's satisfaction with life and sense of self-worth (Kurnaz, et al., [2020](#)).

Improved social contact (Coelho, et al., [2017](#); Grieve, et al., [2013](#)) and a decrease in feelings of isolation are two ways in which social media use contributes to increased life satisfaction (Sum, et al., [2008](#)). The social media environment is useful for creating false relationships among people who otherwise would not be friends (Boneva, et al., 2006). Relationship communication styles and levels of closeness have the greatest influence on individuals' happiness (Huang, [2010](#)). According to Kraut et al. ([2002](#)), weak links can be strengthened to some extent by using internet-based platforms for preserving virtual connections, which substitute worse quality social interactions with better ones. Maintaining friendships and social connections with others who share your interests and hobbies is made easier with the aid of popular social media platforms (Katz & Aspden, [1997](#); Kuo, et al., [2013](#)). One's craving for companionship and friendship can be partially gratified by using social media ([Moody, 2001](#)).

In this scenario, the goal of this study was to find out how self-esteem affects the link between using social media and being happy

with your life. The study focused exclusively on WhatsApp as a social media platform. The following are the proposed hypotheses:

H1: *Self-esteem strengthens the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction through mediation.*

H2: *Self-esteem strengthens the relationship between WhatsApp use and life satisfaction through mediation.*

This hypothesis implies that the level to which social media is used for good objectives, including interacting with people and expressing oneself, influences the degree to which it affects an individual's life satisfaction and self-esteem.

Method

The purpose of this study was to consider the role of self-esteem as a potential mediator between college students' social media use and their level of life satisfaction. The participants were undergraduate and postgraduate students recruited through the faculty of social science. The sample consists of 255 individuals, with 66.7% identifying as male, 29.8% as female, and 3.5% preferring not to say. In terms of age, the sample is relatively evenly split between two age groups, with 57.6% falling into the 18-24 years group and 42.4% falling into the 25-35 years group. In terms of education level, most of the sample (62.7%) had completed between 12-14 years of education, while 31.8% had completed 12 or fewer years of education, and only 5.5% had education above 14 years. Most of the respondents (70.2%) resided in urban areas, while only 29.8% resided in rural areas. Finally, in terms of perceived socio-economic level, the largest proportion of the sample (62.0%) identified as middle-class, followed by those who perceived themselves as having a low socio-economic level (25.9%) and those who perceived themselves as having a high socio-economic level (12.2%).

Table 1

Items measuring Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1989) and Life-satisfaction (Diener, et al., 1985).

Self-esteem
SE1: Sometimes I think I'm terrible.
SE2: I think I have a lot of good things about me.
SE3: I'm just as good at doing things as most other people.
SE4: I don't think I have much to be happy about.
SE5: Sometimes I do feel useless.
SE6: I think I'm a valuable person.
SE7: I wish I could respect myself more.
SE8: I tend to think that all in all, I'm a failure.
SE9: I have a good way of thinking about myself.
SE10: Sometimes I think I'm terrible.
Life satisfaction
LS1: In many ways, my life is perfect.
LS2: I have a great place to live.
LS3: I'm happy with my life.
LS4: I've gotten most of what I want out of life so far.
LS5: If I could live my life again, I wouldn't change anything.

A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the responses, with 1 indicating severe disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The questions assessing each component were averaged to produce two consolidated variables: self-esteem ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 1$, $r = .97$) and life satisfaction ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1$, $r = .95$).

Results

Social Media use

To provide a general picture of how much time people spend on social media, we calculated an aggregate measure of participants' total platform usage (it will be referred to as 'social media usage'), frequency of use, and percentage of time spent. The replies fell into five broad categories: "Almost never," "1 hour or less," "1-2 hours," "more than 4 hours," and "all the time." It was found that 56.5 per cent of the sample used social media for more than four hours daily. More than a quarter (27.1%) of respondents indicated they spent between 1 and 2 hours per day on social media, while over 30% spent more than 4 hours per day on

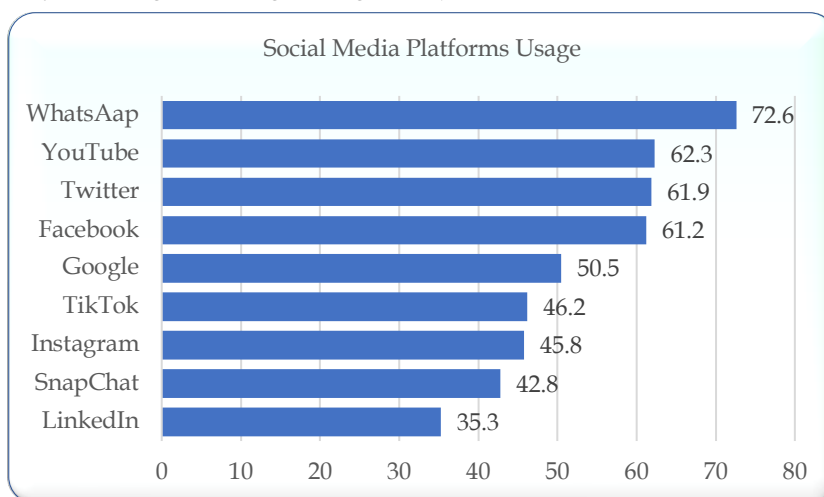
social media. The second-most-common response was "All the time," with 22.4% of respondents indicating that this is their habitual practice. More than half of the respondents typically spend a lot of time online, with many spending more than four hours each day on social media. Furthermore, a sizable percentage of respondents reported using social media "all the time," indicating that some users may be more prone to addiction. Problematic addiction has long been associated with excessive time spent in front of electronic screens.

Social Media Platform Usage

The most popular social networking platform is WhatsApp with a usage percentage of 72.6%, followed by YouTube at 62.3%, Twitter at 61.9%, and Facebook at 61.2%. Instagram, TikTok, Google, and Snapchat have usage percentages ranging from 45.8% to 42.8%, with Snapchat being the least-used social media platform on the list. Therefore, WhatsApp is the most used and Snapchat is the least used social media platform among the ones listed.

Figure 1

Social Media Platforms Usage Percentage among the respondents

**Table 2**

Zero Correlations, Mean, and SD of the key Variables

	Mean	SD	SMU	WAU	LS	SE
Social media use	3.47	1.17	1			
WhatsApp use	3.99	1.31	.621**	1		
Life Satisfaction	3.16	1.16	.300**	0.526**	1	
Self-esteem	3.27	1.07	.270**	0.525**	0.710**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The association between social media platform use (namely, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram) and life satisfaction was investigated using multiple regression analysis. The model was statistically significant, $F(5, 249) = 19.372$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 28% of the variance in life satisfaction, $R^2 = .280$.

Table 1 presents the results of the regression analysis. The standardized regression coefficients (β) indicated that WhatsApp use ($\beta = .531$, $p < .001$) was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction, followed by Facebook use ($\beta = .050$, $p = .602$), YouTube use ($\beta = .036$, $p = .720$), Snapchat use ($\beta = -.083$, $p = .505$), and Instagram use ($\beta = -.021$, $p = .877$).

The results suggest that social media use is moderately associated with life satisfaction, with WhatsApp use being the strongest

predictor. However, the overall variance explained by the model is relatively low, indicating that other factors beyond social media users are likely to contribute to individual differences in life satisfaction. Additionally, the results do not indicate causality, so it is unclear whether social media use directly influences life satisfaction or whether the relationship is more complex.

Therefore, the findings suggest that social media use may be related to life satisfaction, and WhatsApp use may be particularly important in predicting life satisfaction. However, more research is required to better understand the nature of this relationship and to identify other factors that may influence life satisfaction.

The table shows the findings of a multiple regression study that looked at the association between life happiness and the use of five

distinct social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram).

The results show that WhatsApp use ($\beta = 0.53, p < 0.001$) was the greatest predictor of life satisfaction, with a positive and significant beta coefficient. Facebook use ($\beta = 0.05, p = 0.60$) and YouTube use ($\beta = 0.04, p = 0.72$) were also positively related to life satisfaction, but these relationships were not statistically significant.

Snapchat use ($\beta = -0.08, p = 0.51$) had a negative beta coefficient, suggesting that higher levels of Snapchat use were related to lower levels of life satisfaction, but this relationship was not statistically significant.

Instagram use ($\beta = -0.02, p = 0.88$) had a non-significant and small negative beta coefficient, indicating that Instagram use and life happiness did not significantly correlate.

In summary, the results suggest that the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube may be positively associated with life satisfaction, while the relationships between Snapchat use and Instagram use and life satisfaction were not statistically significant. It is crucial to note that the size of the beta coefficients for each social media site was rather tiny, indicating that a variety of factors other than social media use are probably involved in how satisfied each person is with their life.

Table 3

Results of a Multiple Regression Analysis Examining the Association between Social Media use and Self-esteem

Platform	B	S.E.	β	t	Sig.
Facebook	0.05	0.09	0.05	0.52	0.60
YouTube	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.36	0.72
WhatsApp	0.47	0.06	0.53	7.36	0.00
Snapchat	-0.08	0.12	-0.08	-0.67	0.51
Instagram	-0.02	0.13	-0.02	-0.16	0.88

a. Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

Table 2 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis examining the association between social media use (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and YouTube) and self-esteem. The model summary indicates that the model accounts for 29% of the variance in self-esteem ($R^2 = .290$) and the adjusted R^2 is .276, suggesting that the model is a reasonably good fit for the data. The F-test was significant, indicating that the regression model significantly predicts self-esteem ($F(5, 249) = 20.389, p < .001$).

The coefficients table presents the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard error of the coefficients (SE), standardized coefficients (β), t-values, and significance levels for each predictor. Only WhatsApp use significantly predicted self-esteem ($B = .454, SE = .058, \beta = .557, t(249) = 7.773, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who reported

using WhatsApp more frequently tended to have higher levels of self-esteem. None of the other social media platforms was a significant predictor of self-esteem.

In conclusion, this study suggests that there is a positive relationship between WhatsApp use and self-esteem. However, the findings do not provide evidence for significant relationships between self-esteem and Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, or Instagram use.

Mediation Analysis

The study assessed the mediating role of self-esteem (SE) on the relationship between social media use (SMU) and satisfaction with life (LS). The results revealed a significant indirect effect of social media use ($b = .2448, t = 4.4526, p < .001$), supporting H1. Moreover, the direct effect of social media use on life satisfaction in

presence of the mediator was also found significant ($b = .7359, t = 14.92, p < .001$). Hence, self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. Moreover, the mediating role of self-esteem on the relationship between WhatsApp use (WAU) and satisfaction with life was examined. The results demonstrated a statistically significant indirect impact of

WhatsApp usage ($b = .4280, t = 9.799, p .001$), confirming H1. In addition, the direct impact of WhatsApp usage on life satisfaction in the presence of the mediator was shown to be statistically significant ($b = .6498, t = 11.899, p .001$). Thus, self-esteem somewhat moderated the connection between WhatsApp usage and life fulfilment. A summary of the mediation analysis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Mediation Analysis

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		t	Conclusion
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
SMU → SE → LS	.2958 (.000)	.1157 (.000)	0.1801 (.000)	.0884	.2734	3.859	Partial Mediation
WAU → SE → LS	.4653 (.000)	.1872 (.000)	.2781 (.000)	.2057	.3600	7.094	Partial Mediation

Discussion

The statistics confirm the first hypothesis, which states that high self-esteem acts as a moderator between social media use and contentment with one's life. To understand the seeming inconsistency with the prior research, we must consider activity theory and the sense of mastery that is important to healthy self-esteem.

In contrast to some studies that suggest social media use may lower self-esteem, which in turn may lower life satisfaction (Vogel, et al., 2014; Tandoc Jr, et al., 2015), the present study found evidence that self-esteem positively mediates the association between social media use, specifically WhatsApp use, and life satisfaction. Our findings indicate that self-esteem plays a significant role in the relationship between social media use and psychological health and well-being. These results highlight the complex and nuanced associations between social media usage, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life, and underscore the importance of examining these factors in tandem.

The claim made by the activity theory (Danny R. Hoyt et al., 1980): the more one does in their spare time, the more joy he/she'll

experience. In response, the need theory stresses the need of ensuring that basic human needs are addressed. Both ideas have been applied to the question of why people are happier when they have more free time, but none gives a full account of the elements that lead to happiness (Rodrguez et al., 2008).

Confidence and a healthy sense of self-worth are examples of intangible assets that make up one's psychological capital. A "feeling of mastery" refers to confidence in one's ability to take charge of important aspects of life and deal with the stressors that are present in everyone's existence (Backe, et al., 2018; Hobfoll & Walfisch, 1984). People's sense of self-worth is based on their opinions of their own physical beauty, personal potential, and tenacity (Pearlin & Schooler, 1989). Although several studies demonstrated a favourable relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction (Proctor et al., 2010; Saad, 2020), only a select handful have investigated the link between a feeling of mastery and contentment across a wide range of populations (Kim & Knight 2018; McKinley et al. 2012). Youngblom et al. (2014), and Gilman and Huebner (2006). One study of young adults found that proactive coping, which is similar to a feeling

of mastery, was associated with happiness (Wider, et al., [2018](#)).

According to the studies discussed in this article, using social media is associated with improved mental health and greater satisfaction (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Elphinston & Noller, [2011](#)). Two competing theories have been proposed to account for this observation: the activity theory (Danny R. Hoyt et al., [1980](#)), which proposes that engaging in pleasurable activities is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, and the need theory, which places greater emphasis on meeting one's own needs (Diener, et al., [1999](#)). Yet, these theories do not fully account for the connection between social media use and contentment.

Researchers have shown that high self-esteem and confidence in one's talents significantly increase the likelihood of a person's experiencing positive mental health and being happy with their life (Backe, et al., [2018](#); Pearlin & Schooler, [1989](#)). It is important to make a distinction between self-esteem and a sense of mastery when addressing a person's mental health (Kim & Knight, [2018](#); McKinley, et al., [2012](#)). Studies have shown that young individuals who have a strong feeling of mastery are better able to cope with stressful events and report higher levels of enjoyment (Proctor, et al., [2010](#); Saad, [2020](#)). (Wider, et al., [2018](#)).

Thus, we may conclude that self-esteem mediates the relationship between social media usage and satisfaction. The use of social media may increase one's sense of self-worth and contentment through the receipt of positive comments, social support, and a sense of belonging. According to this idea, people will be happier and more content with their life if they spend more time on social media since doing so will lead to more favourable self-evaluations.

The findings provide support for the second hypothesis, which states that high self-esteem moderates and reinforces the connection between WhatsApp use and contentment with one's life. This may be because WhatsApp allows for more intimate and meaningful social connections, which can

enhance users' sense of self-worth and social support. WhatsApp is a well-liked messaging app that also facilitates phone calls and video chats between users. Scientific investigations have linked WhatsApp usage to enhanced mental health and social integration (Winstone, et al., [2021](#); Bano, et al., [2019](#)). Personal resources, such as self-esteem, has a crucial role in promoting psychological well-being and subjective reports of life satisfaction, and social connectivity have been found to increase both (Backe, et al., [2018](#); Pearlin & Schooler, [1989](#)). It follows that one might postulate that one's sense of self-worth mediates the connection between using WhatsApp and being happy. Positive comments, social support, and a feeling of belonging may all contribute to a rise in self-esteem, which in turn can lead to a more fulfilled existence thanks to WhatsApp. Individuals' levels of self-esteem and, by extension, happiness, are predicted to increase in proportion to their WhatsApp usage, according to this theory. Overall, the evidence from both hypotheses indicates that social media use, and more especially WhatsApp use, can have beneficial impacts on mental health and life satisfaction via the mediating function of self-esteem. These findings can be utilized to better comprehend the relationship between social media and satisfaction and to guide the creation of therapies that do just that.

Conclusions

In sum, we have shown that a positive association between social media use and life satisfaction is mediated by self-esteem and that WhatsApp use is associated with increased life satisfaction. Our research confirms that both social media and WhatsApp use are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and that the connection between the two is mediated by a person's sense of self-worth.

Users alone are responsible for determining the effectiveness of social media on their own psychological health. Connectivity and increased closeness in online interactions are beneficial to health. And yet, social Comparisons and other behaviours that

produce defects or aberrations in relationships may have a negative influence on a person's emotional and subjective well-being.

Our conversation also underlines the need for future research on the relationship between social media use, self-esteem, and life satisfaction to consider activity theory and the feeling of mastery theory. Researchers can learn more about the benefits of social media usage on mental health by first gaining a deeper appreciation for the function of these ideas.

Our conversation lends credence to the theory that using social media, particularly WhatsApp, may boost confidence by making people feel more in control of their lives and more connected to others. It is important to continue investigating the connections between social media use, self-esteem, and psychological health in future studies.

Limitations

Even though our research provides insight into the relationship between social media use, WhatsApp use, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, it is essential to acknowledge our study's limitations.

Firstly, our study is cross-sectional, which means that we cannot establish causality or the direction of the relationships between the

variables. It is possible that the link between social media use, WhatsApp use, self-esteem, and life satisfaction is bidirectional or even reciprocal. Future studies could use longitudinal designs to provide more definitive evidence for the hypothesized relationships.

Secondly, our study relies on self-reported data from a convenience sample, which may introduce response biases and sampling biases. For example, participants with high levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem may be overrepresented in the sample. Future studies could use more diverse and representative samples to improve the generalizability of the findings.

Lastly, our research is limited to the role of self-esteem as a mediator between social media use, WhatsApp use, and life satisfaction. Other psychological and social factors, such as social support, emotional regulation, and attachment style, may also play a crucial role in the relationship between social media use, WhatsApp use, and life satisfaction. Future studies could explore the role of these variables in more detail to provide a more thorough understanding of the complex relationships between social media use, WhatsApp use, self-esteem, and life satisfaction.

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