



“Curated Selves: A Psychological study to discover the Impact of Social Media Self-Presentation on Adolescents’ Emotional Regulation”

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ABSTRACT

The use of online platforms such as these has evolved into a daily routine for a great number of people, and it is nearly impossible to avoid in today's culture. In today's world, social media is essential to people's ability to obtain information, enjoy entertainment, and create identities. There is a need for an exploration that gives time to sit and introspect on how social media is impacting one's identity, issues related, dealing with emotional upsurge and perceiving one in the right light, by demystifying the myths, and bridging the gap through introspection, which in most studies are not addressed. A total of 400 responses would be collected from the adolescents out of which 200 would be male and 200 would be female using simple random sampling. The study here investigates two crucial aspects related to the role played by social media in the life of adolescents – the emotional regulation and the self-perception. The study here is able to show the exact picture of adolescents self-perception and emotional regulation levels in the presence of social media and it can be used to make the lives easier for the concerned stakeholders.

Keywords – Emotional; Regulation; Self-Perception; Adolescents; Social; Media

1. Introduction

The number of users on the social media network has been consistently growing. Over the course of the past few years, there has been a meteoric rise in the number of people using various social media network sites. After reaching 0.97 billion users in 2010, the number of users has rapidly increased to 2.65 billion in 2018, with an anticipated increase to over 4.5 billion by the year 2022 (Asghar, et al., 2022). Social media network platforms are websites that can be characterized as online platforms and applications that allow users to develop or share content while also building and sustaining connections with other users. These platforms and applications are based on the internet. They are willing to share their information with everyone on the planet or with as many individuals as the user desires (Aichner, et al., 2021). On average, people will check their social media accounts numerous times per day on a variety of or multiple devices. The use of social media as a forum for information and idea sharing, as well as for being "in touch" with modern society, has developed to the point where it cannot be avoided. These social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, are used by more than one hundred million individuals around the world and are continually growing in popularity (Keke, 2022). People of all ages, and more notably the minds of young people, are influenced by social media, and the rise in popularity of social media is linked with the rise in usage of smart phones.

The use of online platforms such as these has evolved into a daily routine for a great number of people, and it is nearly impossible to avoid in today's culture. The term "social media" refers to a group of interactive computer technologies and tools that enable users to produce and share content through online communities and networks (Zhou, et al., 2020). This content can include information, ideas, professional interests, and other forms of expression. Social media are mediated by computer technologies. It is the industry that is expanding at the fastest rate, and it provides a significant amount of study materials for students in India who are preparing for various types of competitive examinations, including those in schools and universities. In addition, addiction to social media platforms is a potential downside of using social networking sites like these, which may be thought of as the shadow side of it (Bhagat, 2022). This is primarily due to the social reinforcement functions that all of these applications have, the feeling good factor, and the basic meaning

that is being conveyed here is that the vast majority of young people enjoy being appreciated and praised; which increases one's tendency to devote more time to these platforms. In Delgado's opinion, being socially reinforced includes receiving "Likes" on posts, the number of times a photo is shared, or even positive comments from other users.

Due to their increased usage of social media during a period of identity formation—a time when they are free to explore many life alternatives and establish new values—researchers identify kids and students as a vulnerable group compared to adults (Shannon et al., 2022). Additionally, they are used at a time when important brain circuits related to motivation and emotion regulation are still developing. Given how much social media is used in their daily lives, usage patterns and frequency run the risk of becoming problematic. In this sense, young people are more vulnerable to cyberbullying, struggle to cut off from the media, and let it disrupt their social lives (Park & Calamari, 2013). As a result, they run the danger of suffering from detrimental emotional and psychosocial effects. Younger people are therefore a particularly vulnerable demographic when it comes to social media use, and it's critical to comprehend the negative effects on wellbeing that are linked to this kind of problematic social media use. However, it is still unknown how much of an impact social media has on teenagers and young adults, particularly when it comes to problematic use.

In today's world, social media is essential to people's ability to obtain information, enjoy entertainment, and create identities. Studies reveal that the psychological well-being might be negatively impacted by social media use because of virtual social comparisons. Regular users typically perceive other people as more successful and happy (Ruther, et al., 2023). A trend where people offer disproportionately favourable impressions of themselves online is known as social media positivity bias, and it contributes to this perspective (Burnell et al., 2019). This is especially noticeable on platforms where one can use photos to project a supposedly real image of oneself. Use of social media has previously been linked to detrimental psychological effects like reduced life satisfaction, increased loneliness, and body image issues, which are mediated by social comparisons.

There is a need for an exploration that gives time to sit and introspect on how social media is impacting one's identity, issues related, dealing with emotional upsurge and perceiving one in the right light, by demystifying the myths, and bridging the gap through introspection, which in most studies are not addressed. Therefore, finding the solutions of the problems of others and instructing the others about the do's and the don'ts. Studies on the rural population's use of social media make up a relatively small portion of the overall body of research on this topic. It is essential to get research going that focuses on the rural population, especially in India, because the rural population is such an important component of society there. There are research that concentrate on the major cities in India, but the number of studies conducted in rural parts of states like Rajasthan is practically non-existent. There are not nearly enough studies that concentrate solely on the youth of today's society, which is another noteworthy gap that was discovered. They are either categorised as a cohort of young adults or as a group of children, however there are a comparatively small number of research that focus specifically on adolescents.

Understanding the concept of social media and its use in the present times, the current study attempts to investigate the following research questions-

RQ1: How do social media alter one's perception of reality and does it have the ability to distort the perception of self?

RQ2: What impact do social media have on one's regulation of emotions?

To understand more on the topic in hand, a detailed review of literature is conducted in the upcoming section.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. SM & Young Adult Psychology

The use of social media (SM) has a significant impact on the psychology of young adults. It can both positively and negatively influence their self-esteem, body image, and sense of belonging. On one hand, SM can provide a platform for connection, self-expression, and access to a wider range of information and perspectives. On the other hand, it can also contribute to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression, as well as reinforce negative comparison and unrealistic standards.

Bottaro & Faraci, (2022) have considered understanding SM sites and its influence on the emotional well-being of adolescents. The development of social networking sites being so dynamic have led to making a greater impact on the social experience being undergone by the adolescents. This has led to a number of researchers generating interests on the topic. The study has been able to record both positive as well as negative effects of social networking sites on that of adolescents' emotions. The self-presentation of these individuals online and the comparisons often made in these sites can explain the subjective differences shown by them. The problematic use of these platforms are influenced by the amount of time spent and the social as well as emotional skills shown by the adolescents.

Dodemaide et al., (2022) did a qualitative study to understand the influence caused by the use of SM on that of the mental well-being of young adults. The study used thematic content analysis and found interesting results. The study showed that young adults have a different set of perspectives which includes showing an

interest towards maintaining anonymity, how the whole system of SM is being employed and also considering the specific platforms which can act either as helpful or harmful for themselves. The study overall provided a number of careful insights into understanding the nature of young adults when it comes to the use of SM.

Kruzan et al., (2022), tried to understand the impact of the interventions conducted by SM on the mental health of the young adults. The mental health conditions of the young adults is a complicated case and needs special attention. With the help of a review, the impacts that can be found in these conditions are hereby being considered. Using the PRISMA method of review, the study here have highlighted some essential points. There are innovative measures of handling mental well-being of adolescents which can be investigated by means of SM interventions. These interventions have also been reported to have impacted the metal health and can be an essential tool to be utilised in the future.

Beattie, (2021), did a study on SM awareness and the impact of SM done on the mental health all together. The study here focused on the adolescents considered the fact that the impact of SM specifically in this age group can be both positive and negative and this could cause a number of different aspects. The empirical study being done here have been able to find out correlation among the addiction in SM with having depression, conduct disorders and going through a deteriorating level of social skills. The findings of the study can help in making the adolescents more mindful about the use of SM.

Neal, (2020), conducted a systematic literature review to highlight the points of focus in terms of using SM in the present times. The use of data to analyse the social networking among the children and adolescents have been done since a long time, the emergence of SM adds a new angle to the process. After looking at a total of 787 articles gathered from a total of 30 different journals, the study here have successfully 201 articles talking specifically about the use of SM. The study have been able to understand where the data from SM is collected, what type of relationships occur, and how exactly the data collected from here are being analysed. The study suggests that these results have substantial potential to make the gaps in communication through SM narrower.

Pera, (2020), focused on the association between mobile social media usage, smartphone addiction risk, mental health difficulties, and individual well-being. This built upon earlier study findings on the psychology of addictive smartphone behaviour in terms of problematic use, social anxiety, and depressive stress. The examined and gathered data demonstrate that some smartphone application categories have a positive correlation with wellbeing and that sadness and social anxiety are risk factors for higher PSU. Motivations and anxiety states are important indicators of PSU. Participation in social interaction is impacted by high PSU. Despite the limitations of the current evaluation, my findings suggest future directions for relevant research on the social effects of teens' problematic smartphone use.

Rounsefell et al., (2020), examined the effects of routine social media use or exposure to content linked to images on young individuals in good health's perceptions of their bodies and eating choices. Some healthy young adults may have unfavourable body image and eating choices as a result of social media activity or exposure to image-related content. In order to prevent body dissatisfaction among young adults, health practitioners should take into account image-related information while creating social media campaigns.

Schønning et al., (2020), based on their study related to the mental well-being of the adolescents after being active users of SM. The study conducted review of a total of 70 similar studies to highlight the important findings in the subject. The review observed that mostly quantitative measures are used to conduct these kind of studies. The highly researched area in the field of mental well-being is the depression of adolescents in this period. All the studies here have been able to establish the presence of a relationship between the use of SM and the mental well-being of adolescents.

Yu et al., (2020) did their study to improve their knowledge of SM immersion while also gaining a better grasp of the moderating impacts of personality traits demonstrated by young adults during the process. The numbers of users of SM are the highest in the young adults category and hence the study involved 150 such high students hailing from Taiwan. Using structural equation modelling, the study have been able to find out that that there are certain personality traits that does have a significant impact on the attitude and SM use. The safety of the online environment can be ascertained from these studies and make the immersion of the young adults into SM less toxic.

2.2. Impact of SM on Self-perception

SM can provide a platform for individuals to showcase their talents, connect with others, and build self-confidence. On the contrary, SM can also lead to feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, particularly if someone constantly compares themselves to others and perceives their own life to be inferior. Additionally, the curated and filtered portrayal of people's lives on SM can create unrealistic expectations and contribute to negative self-perception.

Chilver & Gatt, (2022), evaluated a six-week online randomised control trial that pitted a positive psychology intervention versus an active control. Life satisfaction, wellbeing (both psychological and subjective), stress, symptoms of sadness and anxiety, and self-compassion were among the outcome measures. It was also investigated if involvement in the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic would have any moderating effects. By week six, the intervention group's gains in life satisfaction were more pronounced, continued for seven weeks after

the baseline, and were true even after taking COVID-19 limitations into consideration. When COVID-19 constraints were taken into consideration, a positive change in composite wellbeing was observed from baseline to seven weeks after baseline.

Steinsbekk et al., (2021), studied about the self-esteem levels of adolescents upon being exposed to the SM appearances. There are a total of 725 responses recorded for children in the age of 10, 12 and 14 years. The scales used for collecting data included self-perception profiles of the respondents. It is found that there is a decreased self-esteem seen in girls from age 10 to 12 and from 12 to 14 years. The self-oriented use of SM however did not impact on the self-esteem effect on the appearances. The inverse relationship as well is not found to be affected.

Wickham et al. (2020), examined the relationships—both higher-order and differential—between nutritional components, physical exercise, and sleep as indicators of young adults' mental health and wellbeing. After adjusting for other factors, physical activity and quantity of sleep were found to be the next best predictors of depressive symptoms and overall wellbeing, followed by the quality of sleep. When confounders were taken into account, consumption of raw fruits and vegetables was the only dietary element that predicted increased well-being but not depressive symptoms. While certain higher-order interactions between health behaviours were present in the outcome prediction, cross-validation did not support these interactions. Young adults' mental health and well-being are significantly predicted by their sleep quality, whereas their physical activity and food are secondary but equally essential factors. These trends, however strictly correlational, imply that future interventions could prioritise the quality of sleep in order to maximise young adults' mental health and well-being.

Barry et al., (2019), focused on the aspects of narcissism and self-perception with the Instagram posts. The considerations here are with respect to the pictures posted of self on the SM platforms and how it impacts on the self-perception levels of the users. The implications of selfies are being considered and data is collected from a total of 100 respondents. These type of posts in the SM are found to have a direct relationship with that of narcissism and self-perception. The societal attitudes and appearances about the use of Instagram for posting pictures among the users are seen to have an influence on the self-perception levels of the users.

2.3. Impact of SM on Emotional Regulation:

SM can provide a sense of social connection and support, allowing individuals to regulate their emotions and feel less isolated. However, when individuals constantly compare themselves to others, experience cyberbullying or negativity, or become addicted to the constant stimulation provided by SM, it may have a negative impact on emotional regulation, leading to feelings of anxiety, depression, and other emotional difficulties.

Iqbal, et al., (2022), investigated the connections, both direct and indirect, between study habits and emotional intelligence in blended learning settings. Blended learning is defined as a hybrid learning strategy that mixes traditional classroom instruction with online learning resources. The study also looked at the function of cognitive engagement as a mediator in the connection between study habits and emotional intelligence. The findings suggest a direct, significant, and beneficial relationship between study habits and self-awareness and self-motivation. Similarly, employing cognitive engagement as a mediator variable, the results show that all four aspects of emotional intelligence - self-awareness, self-motivation, emotion control, and social skills had indirect, substantial, and favourable connections with study habits.

Mulyani et al., (2021), sought to determine whether employing strategies like emotion control may reduce the teacher burnout ratio in Pakistan's special schools by improving working conditions, student behaviour in the classroom, and work-life balance. To achieve the goal of the study, the researcher used a quantitative research methodology. A tool based on questionnaires was used to gather data for this study. The construct validity and underlying structural links were tested using structural equation modelling and confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed that all three variables have a substantial impact on lowering teacher job burnout. Emotional control mitigates the effects of the workplace and the conduct of the kids. However, because it necessitates other methods of emotional regulation, it does not support work-life balance.

Shao et al., (2021), also focused on showing the SM use as a burnout resolution during the Covid-19 period. The study attempted to use emotional notes expressed during the pandemic in surviving the period of distress. There are 538 users Chinese internet users investigated for the process and it found that interpersonal levels and intrapersonal level regulation of emotions is positively related to the outcome appraisal of the of the individuals. The role of SM during this particular period is of immense importance and the use of SM for health based interaction during the time is sought.

Zsido et al., (2021), mentioned about social anxiety existing with the use of SM. The problem of social anxiety in the present times is quite evident and it is essential that there are strategies being adopted to minimise the same. There are a total of 499 responses collected using a questionnaire and structural equation modelling has been used to analyse these results. There are relationships found in maladaptive emotional regulatory strategies being observed which includes blaming others, catastrophizing etc. The problematic use of SM is found to have an influence on the social anxiety. Emotional regulation is surely a factor in its usage.

3. Research Methodology

The research employs a quantitative approach, which proves advantageous in quantifying the determinants of the study. The selected factors, drawn from existing literature, will undergo quantification through diverse statistical methods to derive meaningful results. The research design aligns with the requisites of a quantitative study, predominantly relying on primary data. Additionally, secondary sources such as books, theses, reports, journals, magazines, and online resources complement the study.

The sampling population serves as one of the important part in the entire study. The study here is focusing in the city of Jaipur with the focus on the adolescent residents in the city. The criteria set for inclusion and exclusion of the samples are –

Inclusion Criteria

The following Inclusion Criteria are to be followed when selecting the respondents for the study.

1. Adolescents falling into the age category of 13 to 19 years of age.
2. Adolescents from Jaipur who are social media users
3. Both females and males
4. Five years of Social Media usage
5. No signs of chronic mental illness will be checked by GHQ-12
6. Informed consent
7. Social media sites that will be considered are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram (most used social media sites as per the reports of WEF 2019 & Forbes 2023)

Exclusion Criteria

1. Non - social media users
2. Five years of social media use
3. Having signs of chronic mental illness

For the purpose of the study a total of 400 responses would be collected from the adolescents out of which 200 would be male and 200 would be female using simple random sampling.

4. Data Analysis

In this study two questionnaires are used for investigation – one enquires about the emotional regulation of the questionnaire and the other one talks about the self-perception profiling.

4.1 Emotional Regulation Questionnaire

As can be estimated from the name itself, the above questionnaire is used to understand the emotional aspect of adolescents. The questionnaire used here has 10 items provided by (Gross & John, 2003). The rating here is from 1 to 7 and the items together measure two aspects – cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive emotional regulation refers to changing the thinking process in order to alter the emotional impact caused from a situation. It is the process where the adolescents relate someone having a bad day for scolding them rather than considering them at fault. There are six items in the scale that measures these variables.

The second factor is that of expressive suppression and this refers to reducing the external signs that express one's inner state of emotion. It includes trying to hide the feeling of upset during a meeting with a neutral expression. The remaining four items in the scale are used to measure this variable.

Based on the responses provided, the table below shows a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire.

	Descriptives					
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
When I want to feel more positive emotions (such as joy or am	400	4.50	4.00	1.206	3	7
I keep my emotions to myself.	400	4.90	5.00	0.701	4	6
When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.	400	3.70	4.00	0.901	2	5
I control my emotions by not expressing them	400	4.90	5.00	0.701	4	6
When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as	400	4.50	4.00	1.206	3	7

Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
sadness or anger), I change my thoughts						
I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in.	400	3.90	4.00	0.945	2	5
When feeling positive emotions, I am careful not to express them	400	5.00	5.00	0.776	4	6
When I'm faced with a situation that could upset me, I think about it in a way that helps me stay calm	400	3.70	4.00	1.101	2	5
I control my emotions by changing what I think about.	400	5.00	5.00	0.633	4	6
When I feel negative emotions, I make sure not to express them	400	5.20	5.00	0.873	4	7

The above table shows that mean scores range between 5.20 to 3.70. The highest score generated is for the item stating that the respondent tries not to express when they feel negative emotions. It is followed with a score of 5 that states that they control their emotions by altering the way they think. The lowest level of agreement with a mean score of 3.70 is for two items. One item shows that the respondents do not highly agree about finding a calm way when they face an upsetting situation or a stressful situation. This shows that adolescents do not agree to have a calm way of handling situations which are upsetting and stressful in nature. As all the items are analysed here, the segregation of the items according to the two variables are done.

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Cognitive Reappraisal	400	4.06	4.10	1.001	2.40	5.80
Expressive Suppression	400	5.00	5.00	0.699	4.00	6.25

The mean scores for the two variables generated from this scale shows that the response is higher in case of expressive suppression. This means that adolescents apply the technique of expressive suppression more than cognitive reappraisal to deal with emotional situations. They prefer to hide their emotions rather than altering their thinking towards a difficult emotional situation.

Now, along with the mean scores, the suggested method of calculating the scores by the authors is applied. Here, in order to generate the individual scores for the two methods, summation of the scores for the items representing them is done. For cognitive reappraisal it could range between 6 and 42 while for expressive suppression it ranges between 4 to 28.

Descriptives

	Cognitive Reappraisal Score	Expressive Suppression Score
N	400	400
Mean	25.3	20.0
Median	25.0	20.0
Standard deviation	5.50	2.80
Minimum	16.0	16.0
Maximum	35.0	25.0

The minimum score for cognitive reappraisal is 16 and highest is 35. This shows that the minimum score is quite higher than the permissible score and the highest is also close to the highest possible score of 42. For the expressive suppression the lowest score is 16 and the highest is at 25 which is again the closest to the highest score of 28. Considering the deviations from the permitted lowest and highest score, expressive suppression strategy is applied more by the adolescents as compared to cognitive reappraisal.

4.2 Self-Perception Profile

The third scale in the study is about generating the self-perception profile of the respondents. The scale here has a total of 45 items that have been curated by (Harter, 2012) to get a detailed understanding about the self-perception of individuals. It caters to a total of eight different domains which include scholastic, social, athletic, physical, job competence along with romantic appeal, behavioural conduct and close friendship. This scale is hereby able to encompass all prime aspects of an adolescent's self-perception profile. Before moving into determining the scores for each of the variables, the mean scores and descriptive analysis of the responses are done.

This profile consists of 8 sub-variables which together represent the self-perception profiles of the adolescents. The description of these sub variables are provided below.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Description</i>
Scholastic Competence	5	It represents the cognitive competence of the adolescent based on schoolwork provided to them
Social Competence	5	It is used to represent the social success that is derived by the adolescent
Athletic Competence	4	It is in reference to doing good at sports and other outdoor activities.
Physical Appearance	5	It is with respect to how good looking the adolescent is and how happy they are about their looks
Job Competence	5	It is used to measure if the adolescent is ready with job skills to have a part time job or competent in the job that they are having
Romantic Appeal	5	It identifies the perception of the adolescent about being romantically appealing to the one whom they desire
Behavioral Conduct	5	It is to know if the respondents are behaving with acceptable limits and avoiding getting into trouble
Close Friendship	5	It is used to show if they are able to make good friends with the ones they can share personal thoughts
Global Self-Worth	5	It is basically used to represent how much the adolescent like themselves and is happy with the way they are leading their lives.

Now, as an understanding about the variables are established, the scores based on the responses are provided below.

Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Scholastic Competence						
Some teenagers feel like they are just as smart as others their	400	2.40	2.50	0.918	1	4
Some teenagers are pretty slow in finishing their school work BUT Other teenagers can do their school work quickly.	400	1.80	2.00	0.749	1	3
Some teenagers do very well at their classwork BUT Other teenagers don't do very well at their classwork	400	3.00	3.00	1.001	1	4
Some teenagers have trouble figuring out the answers in school BUT Other teenagers almost always can figure out the answers	400	2.10	2.00	1.137	1	4
Some teenagers feel that they are pretty intelligent BUT Other teenagers question whether they are intelligent	400	3.00	3.00	1.001	1	4
Social Competence						
Some teenagers find it hard to make friends BUT Other	400	3.00	3.00	0.776	2	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
teenagers find it pretty easy to make friends						
Some teenagers know how to make classmates like them BUT Other teenagers don't know how to make classmates like them.	400	2.10	2.00	0.945	1	4
Some teenagers don't have the social skills to make friends BUT Other teenagers do have the social skills to make friends.	400	3.00	3.00	0.776	1	4
Some teenagers understand how to get peers to accept them BUT Other teenagers don't understand how to get peers to accept them	400	2.20	2.00	1.078	1	4
Some teenagers know how to become popular BUT Other teenagers do not know how to become popular.	400	2.30	2.00	0.901	1	4
Athletic Competence						
Some teenagers think they could do well at just about any new athletic activity BUT Other teenagers are afraid they might not do well at a new athletic activity.	400	2.20	2.00	0.873	1	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers feel that they are better than others their age at sports BUT Other teenagers don't feel they can play as well.	400	2.30	2.00	1.101	1	4
Some teenagers don't do well at new outdoor games BUT Other teenagers are good at new games right away.	400	2.50	2.50	1.206	1	4
Some teenagers do not feel that they are very athletic BUT Other teenagers feel that they are very athletic.	400	2.90	3.00	1.137	1	4
Physical Appearance						
Some teenagers are not happy with the way they look BUT Other teenagers are happy with the way they look.	400	2.50	2.50	1.026	1	4
Some teenagers wish their body was different BUT Other teenagers like their body the way it is	400	2.60	2.50	1.115	1	4
Some teenagers wish their physical appearance was different BUT Other teenagers like their physical appearance the way it is	400	2.50	2.50	1.026	1	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers think that they are good looking						
BUT Other teenagers think that they are not very good looking	400	2.50	2.50	1.026	1	4
Some teenagers really like their looks BUT Other teenagers wish they looked different.	400	2.50	2.50	1.026	1	4
Job Competence						
Some teenagers feel that they are ready to do well at a part-time job BUT Other teenagers feel that they are not quite ready to handle a part-time job	400	2.80	3.00	0.749	2	4
Some teenagers feel that they don't have enough skills to do well at a job BUT Other teenagers feel that they do have enough skills to do a job well	400	2.20	2.00	0.749	1	3
Some teenagers feel they are old enough to get and keep a paying job BUT Other teenagers do not feel that they are old enough, yet, to really handle a job well	400	2.60	3.00	1.358	1	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers feel like they could do better at work they do for pay BUT Other teenagers feel that they are doing really well at work they do for pay	400	2.40	2.00	1.358	1	4
Some teenagers feel that they are really able to handle the work on a paying job BUT Other teenagers wonder if they are really doing as good a job at work as they should be doing	400	2.50	3.00	1.119	1	4
Romantic Appeal						
Some teenagers feel that if they are romantically interested in someone, that person will like them back BUT Other teenagers worry that when they like someone romantically, that person won't like them back	400	2.30	2.00	0.901	1	4
Some teenagers are not dating the people they are really attracted to BUT Other teenagers are dating those people they are attracted to	400	2.70	3.00	1.101	1	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers feel that people their age will be romantically attracted to them BUT Other teenagers worry about whether people their age will be attracted to them	400	2.20	2.00	1.168	1	4
Some teenagers feel that they are fun and interesting on a date BUT Other teenagers wonder about how fun and interesting they are on a date	400	2.30	2.00	0.901	1	4
Some teenagers usually don't go out with people they would really like to date BUT Other teenagers do go out with people they really want to date	400	2.70	3.00	0.901	1	4
Behavioral Conduct						
Some teenagers usually do the right thing BUT Other teenagers often don't do what they know is right	400	3.00	3.00	1.001	1	4
Some teenagers often get in trouble because of things they do BUT Other teenagers usually don't do things that get them in trouble	400	2.10	2.00	1.137	1	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers feel really good about the way they act BUT Other teenagers don't feel that good about the way they often act	400	2.80	3.00	1.078	1	4
Some teenagers do things they know they shouldn't do BUT Other teenagers hardly ever do things they know they shouldn't do	400	2.10	2.00	1.137	1	4
Some teenagers usually act the way they know they are supposed to BUT Other teenagers often don't act the way they are supposed to	400	2.60	3.00	1.021	1	4
Close Friendship						
Some teenagers are able to make really close friends BUT Other teenagers find it hard to make really close friends	400	2.20	2.00	1.078	1	4
Some teenagers don't know how to find a close friend with whom they can share secrets BUT Other teenagers do know how to find a close friend with whom they can share secrets	400	3.00	3.00	0.776	2	4

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers do know what it takes to develop a close friendship with a peer BUT Other teenagers don't know what to do to form a close friendship with a peer	400	2.10	2.00	0.945	1	4
Some teenagers find it hard to make friends they can really trust BUT Other teenagers are able to make close friends they can really trust	400	2.90	3.00	0.832	1	4
Some teenagers don't understand what they should do to have a friend close enough to share personal thoughts with BUT Other teenagers do understand what to do to have a close friend with whom they can share personal thoughts	400	3.30	4.00	1.006	1	4
Global Self-Worth						
Some teenagers are often disappointed with themselves BUT Other teenagers are pretty pleased with themselves	400	2.40	2.00	0.801	1	4

Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Some teenagers don't like the way they are leading their life BUT Other teenagers do like the way they are leading their life	400	2.80	3.00	0.601	2	4
Some teenagers are happy with themselves most of the time BUT Other teenagers are often not happy with themselves	400	2.00	2.00	0.633	1	3
Some teenagers like the kind of person they are BUT Other teenagers often wish they were someone else	400	2.30	2.00	0.459	2	3
Some teenagers are very happy being the way they are BUT Other teenagers often wish they were different	400	2.60	2.50	0.664	2	4

The mean scores here are found to be mostly within the range of 2.5. The scores are found not to be quite high as the highest mean score reported is at 3.30 for an item in the variable of close friendship. It is highly likely that while some teenagers know how to develop friendships where they can share their personal thoughts, in other cases the teenagers do not have any such knowledge. The lowest score is at 1.80 with respect to the item of some teenagers being able to complete their homework quickly while others take much time in doing so. In order to understand further about these variables, an understanding of the cumulative mean scores for each of the variables is provided below.

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Scholastic Competence	400	2.46	2.30	0.391	2.00	3.00
Social Competence	400	2.52	2.50	0.272	2.20	3.00
Athletic Competence	400	2.48	2.50	0.261	2.00	2.75
Physical Appearance	400	2.52	2.50	0.223	2.20	2.80
Job Competence	400	2.50	2.60	0.224	2.20	2.80
Romantic Appeal	400	2.44	2.40	0.345	1.80	3.00
Behavioral Conduct	400	2.52	2.60	0.223	2.20	2.80
Close Friendship	400	2.70	2.70	0.372	1.80	3.20
Global Self-Worth	400	2.42	2.40	0.227	2.00	2.80

The mean scores above show that almost equivalent levels of agreement are observed among the adolescents about their self-perception levels based on different attributes. The highest mean score is at 2.70 for close friendship which shows that there are dilemmas observed in the teenagers highly about their perception of close friendship development. The second lowest mean score at 2.44 is for romantic appeal which shows that their perceptions about self are clear the least clear here. The lowest score is at 2.42 for global self-worth. As mentioned earlier this parameter uses the scale to understand if the adolescents are overall happy with themselves or not. Here, it is clearly understandable that they are the least confident about their overall worth. These mean scores represent that the adolescents consider themselves highly effective when it comes to forming close friendships but are least certain about them having high romantic appeal towards the ones to whom they are attracted and their global self-worth. This points towards the necessity to improve the self-perception levels of the adolescents and move them towards a step closer to loving themselves.

5. Discussion

The study here investigates two crucial aspects related to the role played by social media in the life of adolescents – the emotional regulation and the self-perception. These two are vital components that require to be considered effectively during the adolescent stage of the individuals. The results derived from the data analysis conducted are quite interesting and share some similar instincts with previous literature. The emotional regulation questionnaire mentions presence of expressive suppression at a higher level than cognitive reappraisal. This is in concordance with the studies conducted by (Wu et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2023) who exhibited a similar pattern of results. The self-perception profile here is also quite interesting to note. The findings indicate varying levels of self-perception among adolescents across different aspects. The highest mean score, at 2.70, suggests that adolescents feel relatively confident in forming close friendships, although some uncertainties persist. Conversely, the second lowest mean score, 2.44, indicates that adolescents are less clear about their romantic appeal, reflecting some insecurities in this area. The lowest score, 2.42, on global self-worth highlights adolescents' overall lack of confidence in their own value and self-esteem. These results highlight the need to enhance adolescents' self-perception and self-esteem levels, particularly in creating a more positive view of themselves. While adolescents appear adept at forming close friendships, addressing uncertainties around romantic appeal and bolstering global self-worth are crucial steps toward building a sense of self-acceptance and self-love among adolescents. The aspects of self-perception are in line with the studies by (Calero et al., 2018) and represents a similar nature of results. The study here is able to show the exact picture of adolescents self-perception and emotional regulation levels in the presence of social media and it can be used to make the lives easier for the concerned stakeholders.

6. Conclusion

During adolescence, an individual fights an uphill battle to strike a healthy balance between remaining independent and maintaining meaningful relationships with others. These social networking sites offer fresh contexts for contemplating and meditating over by allowing users to try on new identities. They also allow users to check their own self-perception and provide assistance in honing in on their existing identity. As part of a significant shift in the ways that adolescents interact, communicate, and spend their time, as well as the ways in which they use social media, the use of emotions dovetails with, is facilitated by, and maybe amplifies the use of social media. This exploratory research has been able to address the gaps mentioned in this regard and would provide encouragement to parents, teachers, and elders to talk to these young children about the appropriate way to use social media, how important it is to create their own social media profiles, and how they can help guide their children more effectively. And most importantly, it will allow young people and adolescents to engage in self-reflection by assisting them in becoming more balanced in their use of social media, taking into account both the negative and positive effects that it has to offer. As has been stated and discussed previously, the primary objective of this research is to investigate Indian adolescents. Not only will this aid in the adolescents' overall growth and development, but it will also provide the opportunity for other individuals, such as parents, elders, teachers, peers, and so on, to comprehend them and empathize with the challenges they face, thereby making a positive contribution to society as a whole.

In the future course of the study, an investigation based on qualitative methods would be appropriate for providing a holistic overview. The consideration of added elements associated to social media such as proximity of the relationships built through it can be interesting.

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