

Social Media Addiction and Self-Actualization Perspectives in Students

Rashid Jabbarov¹, Gulnara Majidzada², Lamiya Aliyeva³, Aysu Agazada⁴, Gulnaz Mansimova⁵

¹Doctor of psychology, Professor, Baku State University, Odlat Yurdu University, Baku, Azerbaijan

E-mail: rashid.cabbarov@mail.ru, ORCID: 0000-0002-0623-27721

²Psychology student of SABAH Groups Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

E-mail: gulnaremajidzadeh@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0002-1298-4249

³Psychology student of SABAH Groups Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

E-mail: eliyeva.lamiya04@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0006-3269-2736

⁴Psychology student of SABAH Groups Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

E-mail: aysuagazade2004@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0001-0555-7364

⁵Psychology student of SABAH Groups Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

E-mail: mensigulnaz@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0003-0288-5025

Abstract. It examines the association between social media addiction and self-actualization among students. In this article, Baku State University students of different specialties have been studied based on the Bergen scale of social media addiction and Shostrom's self-actualization test in order to determine a relationship between social media addiction and chances for self-actualization. It analyzes a sample group of 188 students to determine positive and negative relationships between constructs like acceptance, genuineness, openness, conformity, influence, and social media usage. These results show a significant negative correlation (-0.444 , $p < 0.01$) between the two variables indicating that with increase in social media addiction, self-actualization reduces. In addition, positive correlations were also detected between self-fulfillment with self-respect and accepting others as they are, authenticity and transparency, self-advancement and omniscience, emotional equilibrium and judgment inside the 60s / positive conception of thoughts with scientific-creative help (all $p < 0.01$). The best indicator of self-actualization among young adults was their ability and willingness to express themselves sexually with a partner as well as their mastery of emotions and decision-making skills, but authors warned social media could degrade those variables. These findings emphasize the need for media use in education and psychology to understand social media addiction among students that affect their personal development and self-actualization.

Keywords: Social media addiction, self-actualization, correlation, students, media use.

Introduction

The growing number of youth that are addicted to the internet worrying about how it will affect their personal development and self-actualization. Self-actualization is a term coined by Maslow, A.H. (1970) referring to the process of becoming everything that one is capable of becoming (or of fully developing human potential). But with the rise of internet usage, especially in social media and online games; we need to ask ourselves if this growth promotes or inhibits development.

Research indicates that the way young people depend on the internet is two-faced, and it may either help them self-actualize or worsen their situation. The Internet is useful because it supports creative expression and social interaction, both of which contribute to personal development (On the positive side). Conversely, the internet reduces real-life contact and cuts down on emotional interaction which can impair one's ability to function effectively and pursue a healthy lifestyle (Golovanova & Vlasova, 2019). Internet addiction prevents the youth to involve in real-life activities which reduces tangible sense of self-achievement by using his or her research politely (Golovanova and Vlasova 2019).

In the same context, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) have argued that social media, especially Facebook impairs academic performance. The study says spending too much time in virtual worlds causes

young people to detach from the real world, and become less capable of fulfilling their destiny. Jan, Soomro and Ahmad (2017) highlighted that social media has been affecting the self-esteem negatively.

Furthermore, research shows Internet addiction, especially related to social network and gaming sites, is associated with lowered self-esteem and emotional regulation (Yakovitska et al., 2022). Compulsive exposure to virtual spaces (Yakovitska et al., 2022) supplants in-person social and emotional experiences important for self-reflection. This not only hinders self-actualization but creates harmful coping mechanisms. The self-perception profiles for adolescents used in this study have been shown to be reliable and valid among Australian samples (Rose, Hands, & Larkin, 2012).

This complicated future state further raises the question of how, or if, virtual environments support self-actualization as technology continues to evolve. Others argue that the internet provides a place for young people to experiment with identities and interests. On the other hand, reliance on virtual interactions may also undermine more traditional pathways for self-actualization and socialization, which are important arenas for many aspects of development (Letcoe, 2008). The central dilemma is using the Internet as a means of auto-discovery without usurping those in reality.

To sum up, there is a complex relationship between internet addiction and self-actualization. Although providing access to opportunities for connection and growth, overuse also presents challenges. Mahadi et al. One of the research studies (2016) has identified that social media play a motivator role in developing relationships between undergraduate students. Getting that balance right is step one in allowing youth to meet the hurdles that modern technology throws their way, and ultimately enabling them to reach their true potential beyond online spaces. The goal of the paper is to further explore these interactions and what role (among other factors) internet addiction plays in their self-actualization process.

Literature review

The rise of internet dependency, among the generation is a pressing concern today. With the internet and social media playing a role in the lives of young individuals the effects on their personal growth, social interactions and emotional state are a mix of benefits and drawbacks. While digital tools offer avenues for youth to engage with the community and showcase their individuality persistent internet use could potentially hinder their journey, towards self discovery and fulfillment.

The influence of the internet, on the self awareness and self realization journey of individuals has garnered attention in today's world. In Maslow's (1970) theory regarding self realization lies the aspiration to unlock capabilities and uncover strengths for a fulfilling life purpose. Nonetheless the growing reliance on the internet through media platforms and online gaming could pose obstacles, to this personal growth process. Young individuals who immerse themselves in worlds might distance themselves from face, to face engagements which could lead to a decline, in their depth and interpersonal abilities.

According to a study, by Yakovitska et al., published in 2022 it was found that the use of media and online gaming has a negative impact on the emotional well being and self esteem of young individuals. Engaging with social media platforms often prompts comparisons with others resulting in feelings of inadequacy and decreased interactions. Furthermore constantly being exposed to the sometimes unrealistic aspects of others' lives on media can contribute to a decline in one's own self value. This decline in self confidence hinders growth. Poses obstacles, to building one's identity (Aliyeva et al, 2021). One must keep in mind that the internet and social media has its own benefits as well. There are some research groups show the youth can search for their identities and new source of interests through the internet. Which, in a way, is something positive; by pursuing different interests online and meeting new personalities lifestyles it becomes easier for every young one to know themselves. Furthermore, social networks help to play an important role in reflecting social support and emotional enhancement. Young people can find it difficult to overcome adversities, and because of this online support groups and forums can help young people cope with anything that affects them psychologically. Yet the problem of internet addiction especially in young people presents real dangers. Too much time in the digital world can detract from actual life, relationships become fractured and detachment sets in- which equates to loneliness. Describing this scenario is one of the major hindrances in the self-actualisation phase. Cutting out the tangible interactions classifies a generation of youth inwards focused thus depriving them opportunities to find themselves and learn necessary social skills. As such, the negative impact of excessive internet use on social and emotional development in youth. It can cause you to not learn and grow in the same way that face to face interaction would, which are all reasons why too much time spent inside a virtual environment is bad for you. This causes the youth to refuse real world challenges and run

towards the virtual world where problems seem easier. And this adversely affects the process of self-actualization and restricts the positive development that is important for a life with meaning and purpose.

The internet addiction and self-actualization processes among young people have in effect challenging interrelationship. Though the digital technologies give young people new pathways, they can also become a barrier to self-fulfilment as that cannabis sometimes falls into excess. Thus, regulating internet consumption while encouraging real-life engagements is crucial to steering youths toward their personal growth and evolution journeys. Youth needs to be guided well through listening and facilitating self-actualisation as changing a generation to live more meaningful lives online & in the flesh is no small task.

Methodology

Hence the present study aims to find out the correlation between social media addiction and self-actualization of youth. The research was organized on the basis of surveys held among 188 students from different faculties of Baku State University and their ages vary between 18-24. There was an equal gender distribution, participants were selected randomly and participation was voluntary. The main measurement instruments were Shostroms self-actualization test (SAT) and Bergen social media addiction scale (BSMAT). SAT measures self-actualization with 15 questions having responses as “Yes,” “Sometimes” and “No” and the scores were categorized into high, medium and low level of self actualisation. The social media addiction scale (BSMAT) originally consisted of six questions that evaluate social media addiction, rated from 1 to 5 . Scoring between 6-30 and can be interpreted as low, medium or high addiction levels. Participants were sent surveys individually via email and given 15–20 minutes to fill them out. A mix of online and in-person formats provided participants with flexibility to respond. Each participant was allotted an anonymous identification number, and all data were recorded anonymously. The obtained data were analyzed through SPSS software. Reliability and validity of the tests were first checked. Then, independent sample t-tests and correlation analyses was performed to evaluate the relationship between levels of social media addiction and self-actualization among participants. For this, the association among social media addiction & self-actualization will be explored via:

1. Correlation Analysis: This analysed the correlation between SAT and BSMAT test scores social media addiction being related to self- actualisation as variable.
2. T-Tests: These examined differences in self-actualization between social media addict groups (e.g., high and low at using social media).

Ethical standards: The study was conducted according to ethical standards. Before participants filled out the surveys as part of the research project they were briefed on the purpose of the investigation and asked for their consent voluntarily. Their privacy was protected throughout the process. The collected data was strictly utilized for purposes. Stringent security measures and ethical rules were adhered to in order to safeguard the confidentiality of the information gathered. The outcomes of this research will provide insights, into the influence of social media addiction on growth and self discovery processes in individuals. The data examination will showcase variations in levels of self realization among people, with degrees of social media addiction shedding new light on this connection.

Results

Several factors are involved in the emergence of social media addiction and its development among individuals, nowadays. Among these influential factors is a low level of self-actualization. Low self-actualization level makes people more addicted to social media. It is suggested that increasing aspects related to self-actualization such as self-esteem and acceptance, genuineness and openness, need for growth and views, emotional regulation and decision making, creative thinking and assisting others could be significant factors in attenuating social media addiction.

So, because of interaction between these influencing factors, the self-actualization level was measured for students. Therefore, Spearman correlation test was performed to assess the correlation of each influencing factor of students' level of self-actualization with their addiction in social media, separately and overall. The results of all tests are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation Between Social Media Addiction and Students Level of Self-Actualization Indicators

Social media addiction	Spearman
Self-actualization	-.444**

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-way).

Table 1: Correlation Test Results between social media addiction and self-actualization levels among students Using the correlation test, it was found that there is a negative correlation between survey answers A and B (-0.444 ($r = -0.444$); $p < 0.01$ or max value min value; $p = 0.01$). This shows that there is a negative and significant relationship between student social media addiction and self-actualization. The finding of this negative correlation indicates that an unhealthy amount of social media consumption can interfere with the relationship between positive psychological outcomes and self-perception, ultimately resulting in a lower sense of self-awareness. Table 2: Gender and academic performance with respect to students social media addiction

Table 2. It derives the nature of relationship between social media addiction and gender- academic performance

Social media addiction results	Spearman correlation test
Gender	.071 **
Academic results	.009*

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-way).

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two-way).

Based on what's shown in that chart there seems to be a somewhat notable connection, between gender and getting hooked on social media (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.071 with a significance level of less than 0.01. In a vein there's also a noticeable positive link, between how well someone does academically overall and their tendency to get caught up in social media (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.009 $p < 0.05$). These findings hint that social media addiction could possibly differ slightly depending on gender though it's not a effect. Gender may not play a role, in causing social media addiction; rather other factors tend to have an influence, over it. In Table 3 presented in the study findings demonstrate that social media addiction is associated with factors including gender and academic achievement well, as self esteem and acceptance levels alongside sincerity and openness traits linked to personal development and outlooks in life along, with emotional regulation and decision making abilities; as well as creative thinking skills and altruistic tendencies.

There is a relationship shown in Table 3 between social media addiction and various aspects such, as self esteem and acceptance, sincerity and openness personal growth and perspective emotional control and decision making creative thinking and helping others.

Table 3. The relationship between social media addiction and various aspects of self-esteem

Social media addiction	Spearman correlation test
Self-assessment and acceptance	-.293**
Sincerity and openness	-.206**
Creative thinking and assistance	-.293**
Individual development and perspective	-.298**
Emotional control and decision making	-.293**
Self-actualization	-.444**

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-way)

Self worth and self confidence (correlation coefficient = .293, P value, than zero point zero one); There's an inverse connection (correlation coefficient = 0.293) observed between use of social media and ones self esteem and self perception levels; this relationship holds statistical significance at the 99% confidence level ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that a rise, in social media addiction can have an impact on how individuals view themselves and their self worth—underscoring the link, between social media engagement and personal perception and acceptance.

Generality and Transparency ($r = -0.206$, $p < 0.01$). Between social media addiction and sincerity and openness, there is a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.206$) ($p < 0.01$). This further indicates the rising social media addictness leads to decline in its authenticity and transparency. So the more time people spend on social media, the worse it will be for their communication skills in general to engage with others honestly and freely.

[$r = -0.293$, $p < 0.01$] – Creative thinking and helping .Social media addiction was negatively correlated with creative thinking and helping ($r = -0.293$), $p < 0.01$ level of significance. This result suggests that the increase in social media addiction might lead to decreases in creativity and help-seeking behavior. Too much use of social media can cause a decrease in creativity and more passiveness.

On Personal Growth and Perspective($r = -0.298$, $p < 0.01$). Social media addiction has an inverse correlation ($r = -0.298$) with a personal growth and perspective, which is significant at 1% level ($p < 0.01$). These data imply that addiction to social media does not help people have in themselves an optimistic attitude towards self improvement and future outlook. More addiction to social media might lead people away from their lives and we may lose gradually some ability of managing ourselves leading to loss of confidence in our future life. Emotional regulation and choice making (Pearson $r = -0.293$, $p < 0.01$): Consequently, the correlation between socialmedia addiction and emotionalcontrol and decision-makingwas inverse ($r = -0.293$) [$p < 0.01$]. This indicates greater social media addiction makes the individual more emotional and controlling, thus reducing the stability of their emotion and their objective decision making.

Interpersonal Value→ Self-Actualization ($r = -0.444$, $p < 0.01$). A significant negative correlation exists between social media addiction ($r = -0.444$; $p < 0.01$) and self-actualization, suggesting that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with lower levels of achieving personal potential or self-actualization. This showcases how social media is a bigger obstacle than many people realise when it comes to reaching your potential. So lots of bad news for the positive claim — as people use more and more social media, it looks like they're going to find themselves less able to realize their goals and reach their full potential.

Table 4. The connection between self-realization and different spheres of life

Self-actualization	Spearman correlation test
Self-assessment and acceptance	.698**
Sincerity and openness	.434**
Creative thinking and assistance	.698**
Individual development and perspective	.709**
Emotional control and decision making	.698**
Social media addiction	-.444**

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-way)

Self-Assessment and Acceptance:There is a strong positive relationship between self-actualization and self-evaluation and acceptance (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.698, $p < 0.01$). This relationship indicates that as self-actualization levels increase, students tend to accept and evaluate themselves more positively. Realizing one's own potential and understanding oneself increases self-confidence and strengthens the process of self-worth.

Sincerity and Openness:There is a significant positive relationship between self-actualization and sincerity and openness (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.434, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that individuals who recognize and realize themselves tend to be more sincere and open. Self-actualization helps individuals to understand the depths of their personality and enables them to communicate with others in a genuine and open way.

Personal Development and Perspective:There is also a strong positive relationship between personal growth and perspective and self-actualization (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.709, $p < 0.01$). This result shows that self-actualization is a critical tool for personal development. Individuals who know themselves can better understand their future opportunities and personal development processes and act accordingly.

Emotional Control and Decision Making:There is also a significant positive relationship between self-actualization and emotional control and decision making (Spearman correlation coefficient = 0.698, $p <$

0.01). This shows that self-actualized individuals are better able to manage their emotions and make rational decisions. These characteristics help self-actualized individuals make more balanced and purposeful decisions in both personal and social life.

Creative Thinking and Helping: There is a strong positive relationship between creative thinking and helping and self-actualization. This suggests that self-aware individuals are more creative and willing to help. These individuals have the ability to think from different perspectives and generate new ideas, which benefits both their social environment and their personal development.

Social Media Addiction: Finally, a negative relationship was observed between self-actualization and social media addiction (Spearman correlation coefficient = -0.444, $p < 0.01$). This relationship suggests that social media addiction may reduce one's level of self-awareness and self-actualization. Excessive use of social media undermines an individual's ability to realize their inner potential and distances them from real life experiences.

Discussion and conclusion

The connection, between internet use and the journey towards self discovery in individuals is a significant concern in today's world. The prevalence of internet usage among youngsters and the rise of media platforms and online gaming have an influence on their lives. Although these digital tools can offer opportunities that aid growth and self realization at times they may also have adverse effects, in certain situations (Jabbarov, 2017; Jabbarov, 2020). The behavior of the youth, on the internet plays a role, in shaping the dynamics of this connection. The internet offers individuals a space, for self discovery and exploration of diverse interests in today's world driven scenario of information access on various subjects and the creation of pathways for artistic expression and formation of new hobbies; social media acts as a strong avenue to share personal experiences and thoughts to connect with others as well as engage, with various cultures allowing youngsters to gain self awareness and shape their identities better. However, according to some studies the internet provides vast resources that are associated with the self-actualization process and facilitates finding its way (Letcoe, 2008). Online training & development programs, for example, is one of the tools that foster personal growth. Conversely, too much internet usage particularly on an addiction level through social media and online video games can leave adolescents removed from real life. These are the types of behaviors that can potentially limit social skills and make personal relationships challenging. For instance, social media can lead to internet addiction and that can affect in-person interactions, lowering emotional regulation and empathy skills. By keeping young people away from the world, it avoids the very mind making exercises that create independence and provides self-awareness needed to develop the whole human being. Internet addiction causes a real-life activity engagement difficulties for young people, according to Golovanova and Vlasova (2019) which results in a decline of self-esteem.

Promoting an unrealistic lifestyle: Social media helps the youth in comparing themselves with others and trying to follow a perfect lifestyle. This may lead to a dip in self-esteem and disrupt emotional balance. Visual culture on platforms where such conformance is ubiquitous and gawking, high competition, creates a debilitating effect on body image and self-actualization by fostering unrealistic standards of beauty and sexuality. In these circumstances, youngsters may well underestimate their gifts and experience evaluate themselves from others who they fully feel are superior to them. On the side of things to consider is that the internet and digital tools aren't all news after all! Sometimes engaging in interactions might actually assist individuals in articulating their thoughts more effectively and forming stronger social bonds with others, around them. For instance.. Youngsters have the chance to connect with people worldwide and delve into cultures and experiences that they wouldn't have had access to otherwise. This exposure helps broaden their horizons and contributes to their growth. Letcoe (2008) along with experts in the field highlight how the internet offers people avenues to explore new aspects of themselves and follow their passions, on a more global scale too. The progress of the internet, through media and gaming undermines the significance of real life interactions and social bonds crucial, for individual development potentially impeding their self improvement journey.

In reality the influence of the internet and digital advancements, on the self discovery journey of individuals is intricate and varied. The way that young individuals utilize the internet shapes the results of this connection. The internet has the potential to act as a resource that aids in growth and self discovery. This can only happen when used in moderation. It's important for young people to strike a balance between their activities and their growth, in life. In order for the internet to be a tool, for development and growth it is important that people's online interactions mirror their real life experiences. This can have an

impact on their journey, towards self improvement. Motivate them to pursue balanced and meaningful lives. The aim of this paper is to grasp the complex relationship between internet addiction and self-actualization, and want to show in what way/through what process young person can live their life with such thing. The internet undoubtedly jumped at a huge opportunity for young people, but through the overuse of it is doing more damage than good into their lives. Future researches should dig deeper into this as well, finding out ways in which the internet can be more serviceable to the process of self-actualization of adolescents/young adults. Research in this area will help us to develop healthier and more sustainable digital ecosystems for young people and society.

REFERENCES

- Aliyeva K., Aliyeva T., Jabbarov R., Mammadli İ. (2021). Students' values and their Mental Health During Pandemic. *Propósitos y Representaciones*. 9, 3:1183 ISSN 2307-7999 Current context of education and psychology in Europe and Asia e-ISSN 2310-4635 <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2021.v-9nSPE3.1183>
- Andreassen, C. S., & Pallesen, S. (2014). Social media addiction: An overview. *Current Pharmaceutical Design*, 20(25), 4053-4061. <https://doi.org/10.2174/13816128113199990616>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 19(2), 109-134. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566\(85\)90023-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(85)90023-6)
- Demirci, İ.(2019) Bergen sosyal medya bağımlılığı ölçeğinin Türkçeye uyarlanması, depresyon ve anksiyete belirtileriyle ilişkisinin değerlendirilmesi *Anadolu Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 20(1),15 22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5455/apd.41585>
- Golovanova, N., & Vlasova, E. (2019). Internet addiction and its impact on emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Behavioral Studies*, 12(3), 45–58.
- Hansen, I. G. (2020). Özünü aktualaşdırma. Şəxsiyyət və Fərdi Fərqlər Ensiklopediyası, 4641-4644.
- 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>
- Jabbarov Rashid Vakil. (2020). Mechanisms Of Socio-Psychological Adaptation Of Refugees. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Debates*, 1(01). <https://doi.org/10.29327/217379.1.1-3>
- Jabbarov R. (2017). Traumatic factors affecting the self-realization of students //International Journal of Pharmaceutical sciences and research, 8:6.: 2682- 2690. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cites=13519971926371496046&as_sdt=2005&scio dt=0,5&hl=en
- Kirschner, P.A. And Karpinski, A.C. (2010). Facebook and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(6), 1237-1245. <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/39544>
- Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2011). Online social networking and addiction—a review of the psychological literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 8(9), 3528-3552. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph8093528>
- Letcoe, J. P. (2008). *Electronic "addiction" and self-actualization: Ethical concerns for the computerization of America*. California State University, Dominguez Hills.
- Mahadi, S. R., Nurul, N. J., Rozarina, J., Intan, N. F., & Muhammad, F. (2016). The impact of social media among undergraduate students: Attitude. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 219, 472-479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.022>
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.
- Rose, E., Hands, B., & Larkin, D. (2012). Reliability and validity of the self-perception profile for adolescents: An Australian sample. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 64(2), 92–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1742-9536.2011.00033.x>
- Ryan, T., & Xenos, S. (2011). Who uses Facebook? An investigation into the relationship between the Big Five, shyness, narcissism, loneliness, and Facebook usage. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(5), 1658-1664. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.02.004>
- Yakovitska, L. S., Pomytkina, L. V., Synishyna, V. M., Ichanska, O. M., & Hordiienko, K. O. (2022). Computer addiction as a new way of personal self-actualization for student youth. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 2288(1), 012040. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/2288/1/012040>
- Young, K. S. (1998). Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 1(3), 237-244. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.1998.1.237>