

Social Conformity, Social Comparison, and Social Media Use

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship(s) between social conformity (where we attempt to adapt our behavior in order to be like others), self-rating (one’s level of self-esteem), and social media use (total amount of time spent as well as ‘online’ behaviors) and their relational long-term psychological and social influences, with gender being a moderating factor. Utilizing data from 144 participants and analyzed using The Conformity Scale, Social Comparison Scale, and The Social Media Use Scale, the results highlight the complex influences social media usage, social comparison, and social conformity have on one’s mental health and self-esteem. These factors have far-reaching implications in everyday life because they have been shown to affect one's mental health, self-esteem, and ultimately, decision-making. Gender was a strong influence on social media usage and self rating. In contrast to males, females were shown to have a stronger correlation between self-rating and social media usage, particularly for females who also reported to be more influenced by pressures to socially conform. The study underscores the importance of wider examinations of these factors and their significant influence on everyday life.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ Is there a significant correlation between social media usage, self-rating, and pressure to socially conform?
- ❖ Which variable(s) (Social Media Usage, Self-Rating, and Pressure to Socially Conform) substantially contribute to predicting influences on our beliefs and behavior, and is gender an influence?

Hypothesis

- ❖ There’s positive correlation between pressure to socially conform and self-rating
- ❖ There’s positive correlation between the pressure to socially conform and social media usage
- ❖ There’s a positive correlation between self-rating and social media usage.
- ❖ Correlation between self-rating and social media usage will be stronger for females

METHODS

- ❖ 150 participants were recruited via electronically providing a publicly accessible survey link on online social media platforms (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat) as well as through direct instant messaging (email, text, social media platforms) of participants. 144 participants successfully completed the survey.
- ❖ 147 participants consented to participate, 3 were excluded from the analysis due to failing the validity check question.
- ❖ Data was analyzed from the 144 participants (age:M=31.39, SD=12.71); Comprised of 65.3% females, 27.1% males, and 2.1% nonbinary/third-gender

Measures

- ❖ The Conformity Scale (Mehrabian, et al., 1995): $\alpha=.59$
- ❖ Social Comparison Scale (Allan, & Gilbert,1995): $\alpha=.93$
- ❖ Social Media Scale (Tuck, et al., 2024): $\alpha=.87$

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RESULTS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Conform_Mean	4.2556	1.01436	144
SelfRating_Mean	5.6282	1.67258	144

Hypothesis 1 : Correlation b/t pressure to conform + Self-rating (negative correlation)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SMS_Mean	2.6218	.96454	144
Conform_Mean	4.2556	1.01436	144

Hypothesis 2: Correlation b/t Pressure to Socially Conform + Social Media Usage (no correlation)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SMS_Mean	2.6218	.96454	144
SelfRating_Mean	5.6282	1.67258	144

Hypothesis 3: correlation b/t Social Media Usage + Self Rating (negative correlation)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.655	2	3.328	3.713	0.027
Residual	126.382	141	0.896		
Total	133.038	143			

Hypothesis 4 : Multiple Regression

Hypothesis 5 : Moderation Check for Male vs Female

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SelfRating_Mean	5.7296	1.50792	39
SMS_Mean	2.4593	0.93723	39
SelfRating_Mean	5.8617	1.45691	94
SMS_Mean	2.6285	0.99628	94

Male vs Female (Blue)

DISCUSSION

- ❖ An interesting aspect of the study is assessing the complex social and psychological relationship between social influences and it’s reflection on social media usage.
- ❖ Findings highlight a connection between social media usage and pressure to socially conform with females experiencing a stronger correlation between their self-rating and increased social media usage, as well as pressure to socially conform being a strong predictor in the relationship between self-rating and social media usage.

Future Directions

- ❖ Re-examine questions proposed from this study and investigate additional psychological variables related to social media usage and social comparison (e.g. anxiety, feelings of loneliness, and FoMo)
- ❖ Recruit a larger, more diverse sample to further investigate the correlations between social conformity, social comparison, and social media usage.
- ❖ Employ a longitudinal design to investigate how social media affects individuals over time as opposed to a specific point in time.

Limitations

- ❖ The measurements and scales used in the study are primarily reliant on self-reported data; introducing bias while participants report on personal self-rating, social media usage, and pressure to social conformity.
- ❖ The majority of participants were between 20-30 years of age, greatly reducing the external validity of the study and its applications to larger populations
- ❖ Social media can influence an individual over a period of time; the study focuses only on the particular moment respondents were surveyed, a longitudinal design can be useful when investigating how social media affects individuals over sn extended period of time.

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