

**RESEARCH PAPER****Sports Engagement to Prevent Social Media Addiction and Augment Life Satisfaction among Early Adults Studying in the Institutions of Higher Education****¹Tanveer Amjad, ²Dr. Asif Ali* and ³Muhammad Afaq**

1. M.Sc. Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Government College University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Associate professor, Department of Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Government college University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. B.Sc. (Honors) Physical Education & Sports Sciences, Government College University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author:** asif.ali@gcu.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

This study explored the effect of sports participation on life satisfaction and social media addiction among university early adults. For this purpose, a cross-sectional research was conducted with 350 participants in total, of whom 175 were athletes and 175 were non-athletes from five higher education institutions. The Bergen's social media addiction scale, the satisfaction with life scale and general info part were utilized for data collection. Independent T-test showed a clear distinction between athletes and non-athletes in terms of their degrees of social media addiction and life happiness. Particularly, compared to non-athletes, athletes reported lower rates of social media addiction which suggested that participation in sports may function as a safeguard against addiction to social media. Moreover, in terms of life satisfaction, athletes showed higher levels of life happiness in contrast to non-athletes suggesting that sports participation or physical activity can be used as a helpful measure to increase life satisfaction. With a focus on athletes and non-athletes these findings help to clarify the connection between life happiness, addiction of social media and sports participation.

KEYWORDS: Athletes, Comparative Study, Life Satisfaction, Non-Athletes, Social Media Addiction**Introduction**

Social media addiction can be characterized by an individual's compulsive and social media addiction platforms, often to the detriment of their daily responsibilities and personal relationships ((Muzaffar, et. al. 2019, 2020 &Turgut et al., 2008). While social media has many advantages such as improved communication and information access, it may also have negative effects, such as appearance of addictive behaviour in some individuals Andreassen et al., 2017).

Social media addiction have a wide range of negative consequences such as, increased stress, anxiety, depression (Al-Menayes, 2015), aggression (Gnapika et al., 2022) and experiencing social isolation Primack et al. (2017). These negative consequences lead to the cardiovascular diseases (Cohen et al., 2015; Silverman et al., 2019). It also cause the neglecting of personal relationships, causing strain in friendships, family bonds, and romantic relationships (Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017). In a study conducted by Twenge and Campbell (2018) found that among social media addiction also effected academic performance compromised mental health and disrupted sleep patterns. According the prior research, Kuss and Griffiths (2017) have found a significant rise in social media addiction, which found that approximately 15% of university students were addicted to online social networking, while Primack et al. (2017) found a

prevalence of around 20% among U.S. young adults. To this end, it is evident that the problem of social media addiction has wide spread among youth and it also exerts negative effects on their physical and psychological health (Allahverdi, 2022).

On the other hand, subjective well-being and happiness is another name of life satisfaction, pertains to an individual's overall evaluation of their life, encompassing their thoughts, feeling, and perceptions of their own well-being and quality of life (Jiang & Hu, 2016). It reflects how content and fulfilled a person feels with their current circumstances and the extent to which they believe their life aligns with their expectations and desires (Diener et al., 2018). Kumar et al. (2016) showed that there was significant relationship between Psychological distress and low life satisfaction among university students as 40% of the participants showed low life happiness. An additional research project revealed that low life satisfaction, which causes anxiety, stress and loneliness (Helliwell et al., 2014) was found in 13.4% of the participants (Alhazmi et al., 2018). Chronic dissatisfaction has been connected with higher risk of cardiac illness and other health problems, so the detrimental effects also extend to physical health (Chida & Steptoe, 2008). Those who are less satisfied with their lives may struggle in their professional and academic domains with issues including low motivation, poor performance, and decreases in productivity. (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Conversely, a high level of life satisfaction is associated with various benefits, including increased resilience, greater bonds with others, better physical and mental health and an overall higher quality of life (Abbasi et al., 2021). It is essential to comprehend the effects of low life satisfaction in order to develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance overall well-being.

Researchers are greatly interested in the factors that can reduce social media addiction and improve life happiness among university students. In this regard, sports participation and physical exercise can be assumed an important variable that may exert positive effects on these two variables of high interest (Allahverdi, 2022). More importantly, engaging in sports and physical activity can have numerous benefits, including stress reduction, improved self-esteem, enhanced coping skills (Allahverdi, 2022), reduce depressive symptoms, higher life satisfaction Vella et al. (2015) and lower loneliness (Afaq et al., 2023). Moreover, among other benefits that have long been documented, participating in sports has been linked to improved mood and greater cognitive function, (Diaz et al., 2019; Muñoz-Bullón et al., 2017). On the other hand, those who do not participate in organized sports may miss out on those benefits, which could impact their overall satisfaction with life (Eitle & Eitle, 2018). Even with the established benefits of doing sports, social media addiction is becoming an increasingly significant problem in the modern era. The primary area of our investigation is how social media addiction and sports involvement are intertwined, as we aim to comprehend how these variables interact and affect life satisfaction in athletes and non-athletes.

The study's primary goal was to investigate the effect of sports participation on life satisfaction and social media addiction among university early adults. Thus we hypothesized that those who participate in sports experience lower level social media addiction and higher life happiness, compared to their non-athlete counterparts.

Literature Review

In modern literature, examining the connection between participation in sports, social media addiction, and life pleasure has gained attention. Athletes generally exhibit lower levels of addiction than their non-athlete counterparts, according to research by Ospankulov et al. (2023) that examined the relationship between social media addiction and sports engagement.

Similarly, Hudimova et al. (2021) comprehensive investigation of social media usage patterns revealed that athletes' disciplined lifestyles positively influence the equilibrium between online and offline activities, reducing their likelihood of becoming addicted to social media. Çelik and Haney (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study and discovered significant difference in social media addiction among sportsmen and non-athletes and the results indicated that non-athletes had higher levels of social media addiction than their counterparts which suggested that sports as a diversion from using digital media could be beneficial. Moreover, Ayyildiz and Besler (2022) additionally examined at this relationship and found that athletes are less likely than non-athletes to become addicted to social media.

In terms of life satisfaction, sport participation is positively connected with higher levels of life satisfaction, according to a study on athlete life satisfaction by Arı et al. (2020). The study showed that playing sports gives athletes a feeling of purpose, discipline and social support which add to their greater level of satisfaction in life overall. Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted by Fraser et al. (2010) on the evolution of life satisfaction in athletes showed a consistent increase in life satisfaction throughout the athlete's professional careers.

Moreover, Ivantchev and Stoyanova (2019) found a significant difference that favored athletes when comparing the life happiness of players to that of general population. The challenges and benefits of participating in sports may contribute to the finding of this study that athletes have better levels of life happiness. Furthermore, Hamid et al. (2020) compared the happiness and satisfaction with life of postmenopausal women athletes and non-athletes and the results indicated that athletes had higher life satisfaction than non-athletes.

In summary, athletes tend to exhibit higher levels of satisfaction with life and lower levels of social media addiction when compared to non-athletes. The findings provided here showed how crucial it is to take into account the particular context of participating in sports when analyzing the connection between social media addiction and happiness. As this is a concerning issue, more research is required to address that what moderating factors are impacting this relationship and how this impact the overall psychological health of peoples.

Material and Methods

Research Design

This study used cross-sectional research approach.

Sample Allocation

Data was collected from 5 universities based on convenience sampling. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 25. Sample size was 350 including both male and female as 175 athletes and 175 non-athletes made up the overall sample size, providing a fair representation of both categories. All the participants participated in this research voluntarily.

Measurement Tools

The social media addiction scale created by Andreassen et al. (2012) was employed to gauge social media addiction, self-administered demographic and personal information sections, together with the life satisfaction scale created by Pavot and Diener (2008), were utilized to gauge life satisfaction.

Data Collection Procedure

To collect data, study questionnaires were distributed to participants from five chosen universities, representing 13 departments and 18 university sports. The participants were given a clear explanation about the purpose of the study before the start of data collection. All five universities used the same procedure for gathering data, giving participants about 20 to 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The importance of ethical standards and laws for research involving human subjects was highlighted, and all the participants were told that their involvement was completely voluntary and they could pull out themselves from the study at any moment. Participants received detailed instructions that included precise directions for answering every questionnaire question.

Data Analysis

SPSS (IBM Corp, 2017) was used to compare social media addiction and life happiness between athletes and non-athletes and independent t-tests was employed. The degree of significance was determined by setting the p value at .05.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Comparison of variables between Non-Athletes Vs Athletes

Variables	Non-Athletes		Athletes		<i>t</i> (348)	<i>p</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Social media addiction	1.47	.500	1.22	.413	2.324	.000	0.545
Life satisfaction	3.29	.110	5.59	.124	-13.91	.000	19.62

Note. * $p < .05$; SMAS; Social media addiction scale; SWLS: Satisfaction with life scale

Table 1 shows comparison between social media addiction and life happiness among athletes and non-athletes. The analysis included 348 participants in all.

The findings explored that social media addiction levels of athletes ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.413$) and non-athletes ($M = 1.47$, $SD = 0.500$) were notably dissimilar, $t(348) = 2.324$, $p = .000$. Cohen's d indicated a moderate impact size ($d = 0.545$). This demonstrated that athletes have lower levels of social media addiction than non-athletes.

Satisfaction with life also revealed the significant difference among athletes and non-athletes. Non-Athletes reported a mean life satisfaction score of 3.29 ($SD = 0.110$), while Athletes reported a substantially higher mean of 5.59 ($SD = 0.124$). The t-test showed a very significant variation, $t(348) = -13.91$, $p = .000$, having greater effect size (Cohen's $d = 19.62$). These findings suggested that athletes reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than non-athletes.

In sum, athletes displayed higher life satisfaction levels as well as decreased social media addiction when compared to non-athletes which demonstrated that physical activity and sports participation leads to increase life happiness and decrease social media addiction.

Discussion

The current research was aimed to investigate the association among life happiness and social media addiction among athletes and non-athletes.

Findings of the study yielded that athletes have lower levels of social media addiction than non-athletes. This study implies that participation in sports may function as a safeguard against social media addiction and the finding of this investigation is typically compatible with preceding studies as a study conducted by Ekinici et al. (2016) revealed that sports-related pressures and obligations, such as practice schedules, team dynamics, and physical activity needs, may lessen a person's propensity for addictive behaviours on social media. In a similar study, Ospankulov et al. (2023) discovered that athletes had a lower incidence of social media addiction than non-athletes. These results are also inline with a study conducted by Havard et al. (2013), who examined the social media usage of student athletes and their classmates who were not athletes and revealed that athletes used social media more logically and responsibly than non-athletes. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2010) investigated that how social media use affected attitudes about sports and players attachment and yielded that athletes were less likely than non-athletes to use problematic social media. As numerous studies have indicated, sports participation may promote more responsible and healthful technology usage habits.

In terms of life satisfaction, the findings showed that athletes had higher levels of life satisfaction. This aligns with numerous other studies that demonstrated how engaging in physical activity and sports enhance life happiness (Downward & Rasciute, 2011; Maher et al., 2016; van Woudenberg et al., 2020). Similarly, Sun and Lin (2021) discovered that those who regularly participate in sports or physical activity live happier lives. Additionally, Collins et al. (2018) also revealed that involvement in sports has long term psychological benefits as well as physical benefits. Moreover, the outcome of this study also aligns with a meta-analysis conducted by Buecker et al. (2021), which synthesized data from multiple studies and established an important correlation between engagement in sports and overall well-being. Converging data from several studies collectively explained that sports engagement is critical for increasing life happiness and overall well-being.

Conclusion

Overall, this study found that compared to non-athletes, athletes experienced fewer rates of social media addiction and greater levels of life satisfaction. These results demonstrated the necessity of including sports in initiatives that support holistic well-being as well as the possible significant advantages that participating in sports may have for the psychological wellbeing of individuals. The findings provided significant new understandings for investigations and treatments in the future aimed at improving life happiness in general and addressing social media addiction.

Recommendations

The findings of this investigation recommended that policymakers and authorities should encourage sports and sports engagement in communities as well as in the educational institutions. Health and Education professionals should also work together to spread the knowledge about the importance of sports participation and active lifestyle. This will help to reduce social media addiction and will ultimately improve the overall wellbeing and life satisfaction.

Implications

The findings of this cross-sectional study on life happiness, social media addiction and participation in sports has important implications for scholars. Including organized sports in lifestyle programs may lead to a happier life overall and reduction in social media addiction. This dual benefit highlights the nuanced effects that athletic participation has on the social and mental wellbeing of the individuals. Politicians, educators and psychologists all can get benefit from the informative information

provided by this study which emphasizes the importance of integrating sports programs into larger wellbeing campaigns.

Future Research

Future investigations ought to focus on delving further into the complex factors influencing the relationship between social media addiction, life satisfaction and sports activity. Longitudinal research could clarify the temporal dimensions of these interactions by investigating how changes in sports participation could influence social media engagement and general well-being over time. Additionally, analyzing pertinent moderating factors like the kind and level of sports engagement can help to clarify the complex relationships between sports engagement, social media addiction and life happiness.

References

- Abbasi, G. A., Jagaveeran, M., Goh, Y.-N., & Tariq, B. (2021). The impact of type of content use on smartphone addiction and academic performance: Physical activity as moderator. *Technology in Society*, 64, 101521.
- Abbasi, I. S., & Alghamdi, N. G. (2017). When flirting turns into infidelity: The Facebook dilemma. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 45(1), 1-14.
- Afaq, M., Ali, A., & Iqbal, F. (2023). Association of Physical Activity with Loneliness among Middle Aged and Older Adults. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 7(2), 820-829.
- Al-Menayes, J. J. (2015). Dimensions of social media addiction among university students in Kuwait. *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 4(1), 23-28.
- Alhazmi, A. A., Alzahrani, S. H., Baig, M., & Salawati, E. M. (2018). Prevalence and factors associated with smartphone addiction among medical students at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. *Pakistan journal of medical sciences*, 34(4), 984.
- Allahverdi, F. Z. (2022). Relationship between perceived social media addiction and social media applications frequency usage among university students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 59(6), 1075-1087.
- Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive behaviors*, 64, 287-293.
- Andreassen, C. S., Torsheim, T., Brunborg, G. S., & Pallesen, S. (2012). Development of a Facebook addiction scale. *Psychological reports*, 110(2), 501-517.
- Ari, Ç., Ulun, C., Yarayan, Y. E., Dursun, M., Mutlu, T., & Üstün, Ü. (2020). Mindfulness, healthy life skills and life satisfaction in varsity athletes and university students. *Progress in Nutrition*, 22(2), 1-8.
- Ayyildiz, E., & Besler, H. K. (2022). Examination of Social Media Addiction and Sleep Behavior of Athletes: A Study on Athletes in Universities. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 8(3), 124-134.
- Buecker, S., Simacek, T., Ingwersen, B., Terwiel, S., & Simonsmeier, B. A. (2021). Physical activity and subjective well-being in healthy individuals: a meta-analytic review. *Health Psychology Review*, 15(4), 574-592.
- Çelik, D. Ö., & Haney, M. Ö. (2023). The relationship between depression, healthy lifestyle behaviors and internet addiction: a cross-sectional study of the athlete university students in Turkey. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14.
- Chen, S., Snyder, S., & Magner, M. (2010). The Effects of Sport Participation on Student-Athletes' and Non-Athlete Students' Social Life and Identity. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*.
- Chida, Y., & Steptoe, A. (2008). Positive psychological well-being and mortality: a quantitative review of prospective observational studies. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 70(7), 741-756.

- Cohen, B. E., Edmondson, D., & Kronish, I. M. (2015). State of the art review: depression, stress, anxiety, and cardiovascular disease. *American journal of hypertension*, 28(11), 1295-1302.
- Collins, N. M., Cromartie, F., Butler, S., & Bae, J. (2018). Effects of early sport participation on self-esteem and happiness. *The sport journal*, 20, 1-20.
- Diaz, R., Miller, E. K., Kraus, E., & Fredericson, M. (2019). Impact of adaptive sports participation on quality of life. *Sports medicine and arthroscopy review*, 27(2), 73-82.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2018). Advances and open questions in the science of subjective well-being. *Collabra: Psychology*, 4(1), 15.
- Downward, P., & Rasciute, S. (2011). Does sport make you happy? An analysis of the well-being derived from sports participation. *International review of applied economics*, 25(3), 331-348.
- Eitle, T. M., & Eitle, D. (2018). Race, cultural capital, and the educational effects of participation in sports. In *Sport, Power, and Society* (pp. 176-199). Routledge.
- Ekinci, N. E., Ustun, U. D., & Ozer, O. (2016). An Investigation of the Relationship between Digital Game Addiction, Gender and Regular Sport Participation. *Online Submission*, 7(2), 298-303.
- Fraser, L., Fogarty, G., & Albion, M. (2010). A longitudinal analysis of the transition to retirement from elite sport: Athletic identity, life satisfaction and career indecision. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 12, e174.
- Gnapika, M., Kour, B., Dadhwal, A., & Ranjan, R. (2022). Effect of Social Media Addiction on Aggression and Overall Quality Of Life on Undergraduate Students. *NeuroQuantology*, 20(17), 1418.
- Hamid, N., Abdoli, S., & Shehni, M. (2020). Comparison of Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Athletes and Non-Athletes Postmenopausal Women. *Journal of Fasa University of Medical Sciences*, 10(4), 2728-2736.
- Havard, C. T., Eddy, T., Reams, L., Stewart, R. L., & Ahmad, T. (2013). Perceptions and general knowledge of online social networking activity of university student-athletes and non-student-athletes. *Journal of Applied Sport Management*, 4(1), 29.
- Helliwell, J. F., Huang, H., & Wang, S. (2014). Social capital and well-being in times of crisis. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15, 145-162.
- Hudimova, A., Popovych, I., Savchuk, O., Liashko, V., Pyslar, A., & Hrys, A. (2021). RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXCESSIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUNG ATHLETES' PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.
- IBM Corp, N. (2017). IBM SPSS statistics for windows. In: IBM corp Armonk, NY.
- Ivantchev, N., & Stoyanova, S. (2019). Athletes and non-athlete's life satisfaction. *Athens Journal of Sports*, 6(1), 45-60.
- Jiang, Z., & Hu, X. (2016). Knowledge sharing and life satisfaction: The roles of colleague relationships and gender. *Social Indicators Research*, 126, 379-394.
- Kumar, H., Shaheen, A., & Rasool, I. (2016). shafi M (2016) Psychological Distress and Life Satisfaction among University Students. *J Psychol Clin Psychiatry*, 5(3), 00283.

- Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). Social networking sites and addiction: Ten lessons learned. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 14(3), 311.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological bulletin*, 131(6), 803.
- Maher, C. A., Toohey, M., & Ferguson, M. (2016). Physical activity predicts quality of life and happiness in children and adolescents with cerebral palsy. *Disability and rehabilitation*, 38(9), 865-869.
- Muñoz-Bullón, F., Sanchez-Bueno, M. J., & Vos-Saz, A. (2017). The influence of sports participation on academic performance among students in higher education. *Sport Management Review*, 20(4), 365-378.
- Muzaffar, M., Chohdhry, S., & Afzal, N. (2019). Social Media and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Youth, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3 (II), 1-13
- Muzaffar, M., Yaseen, Z., Safdar, S. (2020). Role of Social Media in Political Campaigns in Pakistan: A Case of Study of 2018 Elections, *Journal of Political Studies*, 27 (2), 141-151
- Ospankulov, Y., Nurgaliyeva, S., Zhumabayeva, A., Zhunusbekova, A., Tolegenuly, N., Kozhamkulova, N., & Zhalel, A. (2023). Examining the Relationships between Primary School Students' Participation in Sports and Technology Addictions. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, 11(3), 804-819.
- Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (2008). The satisfaction with life scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction. *The journal of positive psychology*, 3(2), 137-152.
- Primack, B. A., Shensa, A., Sidani, J. E., Whaitte, E. O., Yi Lin, L., Rosen, D., Colditz, J. B., Radovic, A., & Miller, E. (2017). Social media use and perceived social isolation among young adults in the US. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 53(1), 1-8.
- Silverman, A. L., Herzog, A. A., & Silverman, D. I. (2019). Hearts and minds: stress, anxiety, and depression: unsung risk factors for cardiovascular disease. *Cardiology in review*, 27(4), 202-207.
- Sun, Y., & Lin, Y. (2021). Using sports participation as a lifeline to promote psychological wellbeing and happiness among older individuals in China: mediating role of social capital dimensions. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte (Journal of Sport Psychology)*, 30(2), 132-144.
- Turgut, A. E., Çelikkanat, H., Gökçe, F., & Şahin, E. (2008). Self-organized flocking in mobile robot swarms. *Swarm Intelligence*, 2, 97-120.
- Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study. *Preventive medicine reports*, 12, 271-283.
- van Woudenberg, T. J., Bevelander, K. E., Burk, W. J., & Buijzen, M. (2020). The reciprocal effects of physical activity and happiness in adolescents. *International Journal of Behavioral nutrition and physical activity*, 17(1), 1-10.
- Vella, S. A., Cliff, D. P., Magee, C. A., & Okely, A. D. (2015). Associations between sports participation and psychological difficulties during childhood: a two-year follow up. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 18(3), 304-309.

