Research Article

Motivations for Social Media Use as Mediators in the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Social Media Addiction

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In the midst of an ever-changing world that we inhabit today, many facets that were once viewed as 'intruding', 'alien', or utter anomalies, have turned into integral linchpins of our day-to-day lives, and without them, the modern dynamics of human essence are portrayed as incompetent. Amongst those pivotal factors are the emergence of the Internet, social media platforms, and the inevitable ascendancy of the virtual world. That is, the perception of what is deemed incongruent is primarily dependent on how well one seems to utilize social media, as it is the cutting edge of the contemporary means of social evolution. Indeed, the conception of social engagement has become completely novel nowadays from what it was in the past, and despite the fact that communication has been altered to fit 'electronic screens', it has facilitated the mechanisms of communication in a way that is simply undeniable. Howbeit, on the other hand, this cacophony of interactive tools has created one of the virtual world's most obstreperous dogmas, that is, social media addiction. The rapid changes in external methods of communication have contributed to the stripping of our innate roots of ordeal human communication and thus completely remolded our behaviors in a whirlwind of what seemed like a revolutionary momentum. That is, socialization and the formation of both individual identity and communal solidarity are essentially centered around our online practices, where the dependencies of such shift in communication transmit further into the entirety of our beings and seep into our subconsciousness. Thus, among the notions of social media's intermingling with human intellect, is the deployment of emotional intelligence (EI) in dealing with social media addiction. Formulating the crux to this research, this paper seeks to shed light on the role of EI in either dampening or arousing the desires of obsessive social media use, especially since there is a major dearth of studies that observe the crucialness of EI management in controlling addictive behaviors on various social media platforms. Through the use of a quantitative research approach, this study examined the role of several motivations for social media use, namely, entertainment, communication, self-expression, and relationship maintenance, in moderating the relationship between EI and social media addiction. This was achieved by distributing questionnaires to 400 participants aged between 18 and 25 in the Kampala Region of Uganda, using a random sampling method. Findings elucidated that EI is negatively correlated to social media addiction, implying that a higher level of EI translates to a lower desire for social

media addiction and vice versa, while all four motivations for social media use were significantly correlated with social media addiction. Furthermore, results conveyed that entertainment and relationship management are amongst the top stimulating mediators for the relationship between EI and social media addiction. However, this also implies that if individuals have low levels of EI, it does not necessarily guarantee that they will most likely adopt pathological social media behaviors, simply because the motivations for using such online platforms critically vary from one individual to the other, while also simultaneously keeping an analytical eye on the role of freewill in promulgating this dilemma in possible future research.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, social media addiction, entertainment, communication, self-expression, relationship maintenance

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is unequivocally one of the most cardinal aspects of contemporary human existence, where any diminutive disturbance in its flow and accessibility to users could potentially emanate a catastrophic economic deterioration globally, and thus entire industries would likely crumble and eventually vanish into perishment. According to Nwabueze and Ikegbunam (2015), the Internet, has become one of the most significant means of reaching out to people and has overtaken other traditional tools of communication and interaction. Jarrar et al. (2020) explained that the Internet being a crucial medium, is often accompanied by myriads of trammels, those of which are associated with how facets like anonymity and distance within the online space have paved the way for the emergence of 'virtual dogmas' like cyberbullying, clout-lighting, and other social deviances that have become much more prevalent in recent years. It is therefore not farfetched to assume that the emotional intelligence (EI) of the Internet/social media users will highly correlate with how they make use of social media as well as the mannerisms that they choose to engage with on social platforms.

A plethora of authors such as Chamarro (2009) (as cited in Saraiva et al., 2018), Hamissi et al. (2013), and Parker et al. (2008), all reached to the same conclusion that EI is inversely related to the Internet addiction. They explained that the higher the level of EI a person has, the less likely they would resort to the Internet addiction behaviors. Hamissi et al. (2013) also explained that personality trait is an abundant predictor of the Internet addiction. They further elaborated that factors like social relationships and life satisfaction are also associated with social media addiction in quite peculiar ways.

Social media addiction, often referred to as pathological social media usage, has been a prime cause of concern for researchers in both health and social sciences. The rate of social media addiction or pathological usage of social media has been pegged at between 2% and 47% depending on the location and type of social media platform (Jafarkarimi et al., 2016; Olowu & Seri, 2012; Shensa et al., 2017). Studies by Hawi and Samaha (2017) and Satici (2019) vindicate that some individuals who exhibit signs of social media addiction end up becoming problematic or pathological users, and hence may develop major detrimental reverberations from such behavior.

Various scholars have proposed several models that primarily aim to address why a fair few people fall under the umbrella of pathological users of social media, while others contrarily demonstrate a healthy user-platform dynamic. For instance, the interaction of person-affect-cognition-execution model suggests that a person's major characteristic features, such as social cognition, personality, usage motives, and psychosocial factors, are associated with their decision to make use of a particular platform and derive gratification from it, in which case, these factors can result in pressing the Internet use disorders (Brand et al., 2016). Moreover, the uses and gratification theory (UGT) posit that individuals make use of variegated media tools to achieve a particular motivation or indulgence, while simultaneously stressing the significance of the fact that individual differences may also affect one's media preferences and how frequently and suitably social media is being used (Katz et al., 1973; Ryan et al., 2014).

According to Samari and Tahmasbi (2007), EI can be described as the type of emotional processing that includes the evaluation of emotions in oneself and others as well as the ability to develop the right emotional expression when interacting with others. While it has long been confirmed that personality traits, including EI, to a great extent influence an individual's tendency to grow a pathological obsession with social media, very few studies, on the other hand, have magnified how the incentives for using social media mediate and establish this specific relationship. Hence, reflecting the gap that this study intends to mainly address.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have been carried out to grasp the different motivations for social media and media usage in general. In fact, since the advent of traditional mass media, scholars have been ubiquitously concerned with the provocations of utilizing mass media as well as how the decision-making process of social media usage is truly brought about. Thus, this study chiefly sheds light on the different motivations for social media usage, as posited by Horzum (2016), who highlighted several user-inducing idiosyncrasies of social media that retaliate neurotic online habits, which include the followings:

1. Passing time

2. Maintaining existing relationships

3. Entertainment

4. Meeting new people/socialization

5. Self-promotion in the form of expressing one's more popular self

6. Task management

7. Garnering information for educational purposes.

It is perhaps essential to mention that the UGT suggests that the decision to make use of social media is radically steered by individual choices to gratify specific needs, which may differ based on various personality traits. A recent study by Kircaburun et al. (2018) sought to understand the relationship between social media use and the big five personality traits and extrapolated that those who tend to sway towards the more outgoing margin of social interaction and communication tend to make use of social media to attain social gratifications such as maintaining existing relationships, task management, and educational and informational gratifications. He proceeded to imply that people who are more introverted and socially conscientious tend to make use of social media as an abundant harbinger for self-expression and hence a mouthpiece that bridges a projection of a positive public image. Another study by Horzum (2016) focuses on the Facebook usage of university students and the motivations that redirect their modes of virtual engagement on the platform. Findings elucidate that socially conscientious students are generally more likely to make use of Facebook to maintain existing relationships, while those that are more extroverted tend to deploy Facebook as an informative and educational tool for the most part. By the same token, another study conducted by Simsek et al. (2019) explored the user behavior motivations for social media as a type of technological addiction amongst both high school and college-level students using the "Bergen Facebook addiction scale". Through a comparative data analysis and interpretation, the study concluded that both university and high school students exhibit similar levels of social media addiction, while differences in factors like gender, duration of use, and variations in high schools and university departments were also palpable in terms of navigating technological addiction tendencies amongst the compared groups.

Additionally, Siegling et al. (2015) argued that those who are emotionally intelligent tend to be more agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable, extroverted, and all-in-all gregarious. Therefore, it is quite possible that these aforementioned traits can influence the motivations for social media usage amongst this particular group of individuals. Moreover, the authors go on to explain that a higher level of EI might be associated with an elevated approach to social media usage, which is primarily driven by task management and the exigency to convene information for further purposes.

Various scholars who have implanted the UGT as the linchpin to their studies, and in correlation to the motivations of social media usage and their relationship to social media addiction, have concluded that motives of social media usage like, self-presentation/promotion, entertainment, maintaining relationships, developing new relations, and escapism are all related to rather intrinsic and problematic social media behaviors (Chen & Kim, 2013; Floros & Siomos, 2013; Huang, 2011; Kircaburun et al., 2018; Koc & Gulyagci, 2013). Sural et al. (2018), in their study on EI and the paradoxical whirlwinds of social media consumption, investigated the direct and indirect relationships between EI and problematic social media use via the motivations for social media engagement. Hence, they deduced that EI plays a colossal role in igniting the motives for overall social media usage.

Additionally, it is believed that those addicted to social media tend to utilize such platforms in an effort to project their best selves, which has been stated to be one of the motivations for social media usage. That said, public social comparisons have soon become an indigenous trait of one's online presence and continue to grow as people naturally make use of social media. In fact, studies have manifested that individuals who compare their physical attributes to others tend to have a belittled and troublesome perception of themselves, especially when it comes to physical self-satisfaction and body image, and hence an all-around complete sense of a distorted individualistic identity, which may critically trigger social anxiety and other psychological perplexities (Buunk et al., 2006, as cited in Khan et al., 2020; Corning et al., 2006; Dittmar & Howard, 2004; Mckee et al., 2013). Through an interdisciplinary binocular that intends to shed light on the correlative point between the Internet addiction and EI, the foregoing study emphasizes how excessive use of social media can amplify negative feelings such as inferiority complexes, jealousy, social identity disorders, and utter helplessness, which are all a direct result of ongoing upward social comparisons. With that being said, and in relation to the malevolent connotations of social media addiction and its impact on forming a true sense of identity, Siah et al. (2021) delved into the role of excessive social media consumption in formulating one's intrinsic qualities and dispositions and hence how the dark triad psychological theory of personality is considered a significant predictor for such behavior. Moreover, through adopting the personality-outcome theory, researchers examined whether coping mechanisms mitigate the negative impact of dark triad personality on addiction to social media. Amongst the three personality traits (narcissism), (Machiavellianism), and (psychopathy), only narcissism was associated with social media addiction, which further emphasized how certain personal attributes may influence online behaviors and, similarly, how social media can instigate and feed specific personality types and distinctive temperaments.

Furthermore, Kuss and Griffiths (2011) explain that addictions and problematic behaviors may be nothing more than a reflection of what users encounter in their "tangible" lives, and hence, such unconventional proclivities are metaphorically an escapist gateway that aids users in coping with their real-life conundrums and dilemmas. Moreover, EI has also been linked to several forms of abuse (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). That said, studies by Kun and Demetrovics (2010) highlight that low EI plays a substantial role in the development and maintenance of discombobulated behaviors, including substance and alcohol abuse. Since EI has been empirically linked to different forms of addiction, scholars globally have attempted to study the relationship between social media usage and EI. On this note, studies by Beranuy et al. (2009), Che et al. (2017), and Parker et al. (2008) all point to the fact that EI is highly associated with pathological usage of technological communication media such as the Internet, smartphones, social media, and gaming.

Another study by Wen et al. (2022), on the different motivations of social media usage and users' well-being, found that the intensity of social media motivations is positively associated with users' wellbeing, perceived social support, and positive self-presentation. Their findings also indicated that social interaction, entertainment, and information all indirectly affected the well-being of social media users through different mediation paths. In the same vein, Wang et al. (2014) corroborated that university students who made use of a particular social media platform, 'Qzone', for social interaction exhibited traces of a higher level of social well-being than those who made use of the platform for solely entertainment purposes. This was supported by Guo et al. (2014), who vindicated that "Weibo" and "Facebook" users who made use of these platforms for the intent of garnering information and engaging in social activities were in fact positively distinguished from those who made use of the platforms for entertainment purposes, especially when it comes to the measurement of social well-being and communal edification.

Withal, a study by Baek et al. (2014) on social media use motivations and the well-being of SNS users emphasized that those that utilize social media for interpersonal motives have lower levels of well-being. Their findings also suggested that entertainment and information-seeking motives had no effect on the well-being of social media users, nor did they impact social media users' online behavior. Finally, a more recent study by Jarman et al. (2021) that underpinned adolescent Facebook users and how social interaction mediated well-being concluded that information sharing, escapism, and passing time were all negatively correlated with wellbeing. According to Wen et al. (2022), a minuscule number of studies explored the correlation between motivations for social media usage, artificial intelligence, and media addiction. Therefore, and based on the foregoing, this study seeks to examine the mediating role of social media usage motivations in the relationship between social media addiction and EI.
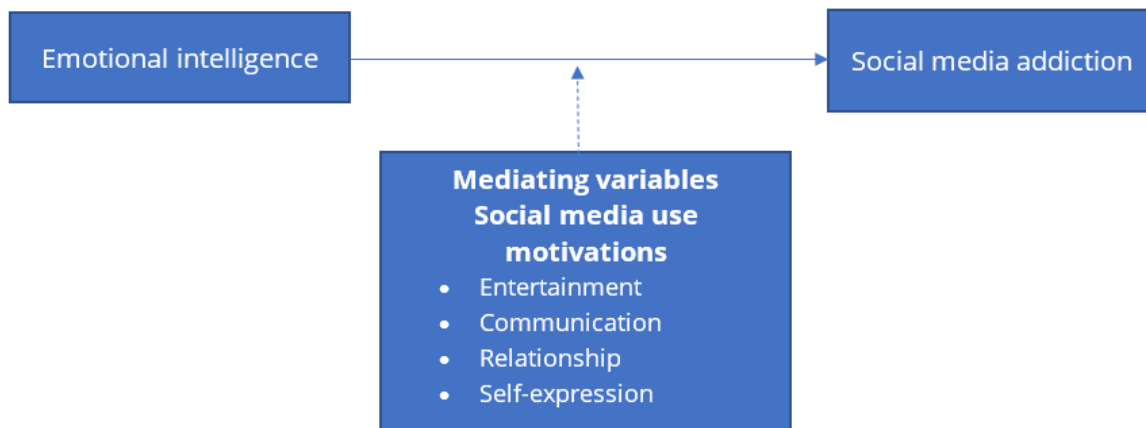
Figure 1. Conceptual framework illustrating the hypothesized relationship between emotional intelligence, social media addiction, and social media use motivations (Source: Authors)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The conceptual framework in **Figure 1** shows the relationships that this study seeks to analyze and establish. The researchers suggest that the higher the level of EI, the less likely an individual is prone to social media addiction. However, they propound that this relationship is also moderated by further social media use motivations. The assumption is that certain factors (motivation for social media use) will enhance or emphasize the relationship between EI and social media addiction, while others will negatively impact the relationship.

It is therefore based on these assumptions that the following hypotheses were developed:

1. **H1:** EI is inversely related to social media addiction.
2. **H2:** The relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by entertainment as a motivation for social media usage.
3. **H3:** The relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by communication as a motivation for social media usage.
4. **H4:** The relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by relationship building and maintenance as a motivation for social media usage.
5. **H5:** The relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by self-expression as a motivation for social media usage.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study made use of a quantitative research approach where the researchers distributed 400 questionnaires to participants between the ages of 18 and 25 in the Kampala Region of Uganda. Quantitative research, according to Creswell (2003), can be used to discern the relationships between variables within a particular study. This approach is the most appropriate since this study seeks to explain the relationship between social media usage motivations, social media addiction, and EI.

Study Participants

This study involved youths and young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, living in the Kampala region of Uganda. According to Facebook insights, 90% of Facebook users who live in the Kampala region are aged between 18 and 25 years old. It was therefore based on this data that the researchers opted to focus this study on this category of respondents. Kampala is an urban area with a population of over seven million people and is home to most of the universities in Uganda. This perhaps explains why most youths that access and make use of social media platforms live in this particular region.

Table 1. Sample size breakdown according to Kampala Capital City regions

S/N	Study area	Sample size
1	Kampala Central Division	80
2	Kawempe Division	80
3	Makindye Division	80
4	Nakawa Division	80
5	Rubaga Division	80
Total		400

In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed around Kampala, as detailed in **Table 1**.

The participants can further be differentiated based on gender and educational levels. For bye, 52% of the participants were female, 20% were currently studying at university, 15% had graduated from a university program, 45% had completed secondary school and sought admission into university, while 20% had not finished secondary school.

Measures

This study aims to test the relationship between three variables, namely, social media use motivations, social media addiction, and EI. To do this, the researchers opted to make use of a questionnaire that combined the following scales: scale of motives for using social networking sites (SMU-SNS) as developed by Pertegal et al. (2019), the Schutte self-report EI test (SSEIT) as developed by Schutte et al. (2009), and the Bergen social media addiction scale (BSMAS) as developed by Andreassen et al. (2016).

The SMU-SNS scale was used to measure social media usage motivations and has 27 items on nine different factors. The nine factors consist of data, new friendships, academic purpose, social connectedness, following and monitoring others, entertainment, social recognition, self-expression, and information.

The SSEIT scale was used to measure the self-reported EI of the respondents. The scale measures general EI using four sub-scales, namely, emotional perception, managing self-relevant emotions, utilizing emotions, and managing others' emotions. The scale includes a 33-item self-report on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree".

Finally, the BSMAS scale was used to measure social media addiction. The BSMAS by Andreassen et al. (2016) consists of six items and is measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being "very rarely" to 5 being "very often".

In total, the questionnaire for this study included 66 Likert scale-type questions that could be answered in 40 minutes on average. These scales have been extensively used in numerous studies on social media addiction, social media usage, and EI and have all been found to be reliable and valid in studies focusing on youths.

Procedure

Stratified random sampling was used to distribute the questionnaires. This was to ensure that every region in Kampala, the capital city, was represented in this study. The sample population was sub-divided into different strata, which included the five geo-political regions of Kampala, as detailed in **Table 1**. Once the strata were identified, the researchers then proceeded to distribute 80 questionnaires within each stratum, making use of the convenience sampling approach.

The implication was that after arriving at one of the city's regions, such as the Wakiso District, for instance, the researchers randomly approached a household and distributed the questionnaire to individuals that fit the selection criteria (aged between 18 and 25). If no one in that household fit the criteria, then the researcher proceeded to the next available household and so forth. This continuum was repeated until 400 questionnaires were successfully distributed (80 in each stratum).

Statistical Analysis

JAMOVI *1.8.4.0* software was used to process the data while path analysis and GLM were used to test the hypotheses.

Table 2. Correlation analysis of EI, motivation for social media use, and social media addiction

	EI	SMA	ET	CM	SE	RM
EI	-					
SMA	-0.337**	-				
ET	-0.482**	0.674***	-			
CM	0.439***	-0.297*	-0.443***	-		
SE	0.493**	-0.318***	-0.505*	0.421***	-	
RM	0.581***	-0.483***	-0.590***	0.467*	0.496**	-

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001; EI: Emotional intelligence; SMA: Social media addiction; ET: Entertainment; CM: Com3munication; SE: Self-expression; & RM: Relationship maintenance

Table 3. Indirect and total effects

Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI (a)		β	z	p-value
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	EI⇒ET⇒SMA	-0.4915	0.0623	-0.6153	-0.3711	-0.3072	-7.890	<0.001
	EI⇒CM⇒SMA	0.0166	0.0330	-0.0493	0.0800	0.0104	0.503	0.615
	EI⇒RM⇒SMA	-0.1578	0.0479	-0.2488	-0.0613	-0.0986	-3.297	<0.001
	EI⇒SE⇒SMA	0.0479	0.0360	-0.0234	0.1175	0.0299	1.332	0.183
Component	EI⇒ET	-0.6491	0.0605	-0.7666	-0.5296	-0.4821	-10.734	<0.001
	ET⇒SMA	0.7572	0.0631	0.6373	0.8846	0.6372	12.002	<0.001
	EI⇒CM	0.7313	0.0792	0.5789	0.8894	0.4389	9.233	<0.001
	CM⇒SMA	0.0227	0.0450	-0.0672	0.1091	0.0236	0.504	0.614
	EI⇒RM	0.6956	0.0539	0.5909	0.8022	0.5809	12.906	<0.001
	RM⇒SMA	-0.2268	0.0680	-0.3558	-0.0893	-0.1697	-3.336	<0.001
	EI⇒SE	0.7568	0.0677	0.6238	0.8891	0.4928	11.180	<0.001
	SE⇒SMA	0.0633	0.0470	-0.0299	0.1542	0.0607	1.348	0.178
Direct	EI⇒SMA	0.0369	0.0832	-0.1234	0.2026	0.0231	0.444	0.657
Total	**EI⇒SMA**	**-0.5479**	**0.0767**	**-0.6982**	**-0.3976**	**-0.3367**	**-7.143**	**<0.001**

Note. EI: Emotional intelligence; SMA: Social media addiction; ET: Entertainment; CM: Communication; SE: Self-expression; & RM: Relationship maintenance; confidence intervals computed with parametric bootstrap; & β values are completely standardized effect sizes

RESULTS

According to the data presented in **Table 2**, EI is negatively correlated to social media addiction (r=-0.337, p<0.01). The result indicates that a high level of EI is associated with a low level of social media addiction. Young adults that suffer from social media addiction most likely have low EI.

All four aspects of motivation for social media use significantly correlated with social media addiction. Communication, relationship maintenance, and self-expression negatively correlated with social media addiction (r=-0.297, p<0.05; r=-0.318, p<0.001; r=-0.483, p<0.001) while entertainment positively correlated (r=-0.674, p<0.001).

As shown in **Table 3**, motivations for using social media have an intermediary role in the influence of EI on social media addiction. EI has a total negative predictive effect on social media addiction (β=-0.337, p<0.001), indicating that the higher level of EI, the less likely a student develops social media addiction. However, only entertainment (β=-0.307, p<0.001), and relationship maintenance (β=-0.099, p<0.001) mediated the relationship between EI and social media addiction exclusively.

DISCUSSION

Based on the foregoing, hypothesis 1, stating that "EI is inversely related to social media addiction," is in fact accepted. The implication is that the lower the EI of young adults, the higher the chances of them becoming addicted to social media. This finding supports those proposed by Griffiths et al. (2019) and Kuss and Griffiths (2011), who ascertained in their various studies that EI has been linked to all sorts of addictions, including alcohol addiction. Similarly, a study by Kun and Demetrovics (2010) also suggested that EI is directly linked to different forms of addiction. However, these authors did not consider social media addiction or technology addiction in particular, but instead only focused on substance and alcohol abuse.

Yet, more directly linked to this study are those by Beranuy et al. (2009), Che et al. (2017), and Parker et al. (2008), who all found that EI is highly associated with the pathological usage of technology, which includes the Internet, social media, and gaming.

It is crucial to fathom that an individual's level of EI predominately determines their ability to profoundly exert soft skills that are fundamental for personal and social prosperity. That is, when one is aware of the impeccable power of emotion, they will hence be able to grasp, reason, and deliver external actions that to a great extent mirror the internal state of mind. Therefore, a low level of EI may resemble a disposition of vulnerability towards the outside world, in which it is widely believed that the more emotional control an individual has, the more likely they will be able to communicate with their surroundings both fruitfully and cognizant. This very principle has become relatively wonted in modern times, especially when the totality of our existence today has been ramified between the routine interactions of the 'tangible-world', and between a completely novel form of the intruding quiddity of the virtual world. In fact, this shriek of human identity has taken a monumental toll on our intrinsic qualities of self-awareness, self-subsistence, tenacity, and the human all-embracing sense of complacency.

This is because although EI has long been vindicated to be the cornerstone of a well-elaborated social life, the emergence of ground-breaking technologies and thus umpteen social media platforms has truly shaken the perspective of how one views EI as an innate ability, in which the human intellect is now expected to cater to the unprecedentedness of the online milieu. Especially, the fact that we have to continually hone our social relationships while simultaneously maintaining the–virtual persona–we have built for ourselves, which can truly become radically exasperating over time, especially when it comes to the ongoing contemplation of two public images, which again requires an amazeballs proficiency of EI and self-disincline.

On this note, studies have proven that although social media addiction is first and foremost a behavioral addiction, it is yet bio-psychologically stimulated like any other form of addiction, and that is through activating the brain's feel-good chemicals, where neurochemical agents like dopamine can become critically addictive, especially for its role in achieving a state of trance and a complete and fulfilling euphoric momentum of pleasure and well-being (Watson, 2021). Apart from social media addiction being invigorated by chemical brain messengers, even in the ordinary individual, those stimulating hormones like dopamine, epinephrine, serotonin, oxytocin etc., have a pivotal role in regulating emotions and hence influencing external actions and decision-making processes (Trettenero, 2020). Often associated with the threat response system, researchers describe this conundrum as a path on which emotions are guided, controlled, or even curbed; that is, through an ever-present internal dialogue of a fight or flight response. We tend to feel 'physical sensations driven by chemicals that are automatically released due to external and internal stimuli'. And social media is rigorously designed in such a way that appears to constantly trigger the brain to release such chemical agents that seem to increase the potential of the Internet addiction.

Therefore, an emotionally intelligent individual, in general, has the required competence and mindful aptitude to accurately control their fight or flight actions, which are then mirrored through external stimuli and hence social behavior. Together with, fathoming certain provoking emotions that induce a 'call for action' response, irrespective of what the temptations are, be it substance, alcohol, the Internet, social media, or any addictive activities as a whole. Yet, individuals with low EI are simply impuissant when it comes to decoding all the bewildering both 'physical and psychological' catalysts that transpose emotions into real life exertions and actions. This exact dogma is indeed applicable to the relationship between EI and social media addiction because regardless of what the 'ends' (different temptations) are, the 'means' (EI moderators and neurochemical reactions) remain consistent.

When we become inundated with a certain type of emotion, our rationale for making perceptions and being aware of a situation seems to become riddled by our emotions. Therefore, if one is not au courant with the power of EI, they would allow such emotionally-driven scenarios to occur and steer their actions, while on the other hand, someone who is self-aware would most likely lean more towards the margin of sensibility rather than spontaneously. This is because someone who is emotionally intelligent is believed to have the required abilities and innate serenity to monitor and filter certain emotions that can become detrimental to both them and their surrounding environment.

While, on the opposite pole, individuals low in EI do not necessarily grasp nor master this concept of 'emotional filtration' or curtailing, and hence their rationale of emotional stimulus becomes distorted, and consequently beams abruptly to the outside world in the form of 'scattered and overly impulsive emotions' that unequivocally rout actions. That said, social media as a medium is a fertile ground that starts the quest of 'magnetizing users to screens' by unapologetically vacuuming those emotions, re-energizing them, and then creating perplexed individuals with contorted EI who can become severely chained and addicted to social media.

Nevertheless, this also paves the way for one of the most unrelenting and persistent debates, which relates to the role of human freewill-dilemma, which capitalizes on the concern of whether humans possess thoroughgoing power over their actions, and thence whether they are driven by forces outside the conscious control of one's mind or not, especially in relevance to addiction, and one's 'decision' to consciously navigate habitual behaviors while concomitantly deluding neurochemicals as the sole factors accountable and responsible for our actions, which may be an effort to conquer our emotions and restrain both plausible and unfounded temptations, and hence leading to the main point of concern; To what extent do humans control emotionally-driven actions, and what portion of those behaviors is actually ignited by mental chemical agents? That said, do individuals have control over their social media consumption? How much free-will is implemented in such 'user-based' decisions, and to what extent do the brain's neurochemicals and addiction margins play a role in this? Indeed, such manifold topics may yield thought-enlightening fruit if tackled in future research and studies of this nature.

Results also convey that hypothesis 2, which states that "the relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by entertainment as a motivation for social media usage" and hypothesis 4, which states that "the relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by relationship building and maintenance as a motivation for social media usage" are also accepted. While hypothesis 3, promulgating that "the relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by communication as a motivation for social media usage" and hypothesis 5, which avers that "the relationship between EI and social media addiction is mediated by self-expression as a motivation for social media usage", are on the other hand rejected.

The implication is that while it has been established that EI is a predictor of social media addiction, the findings of this study have shown that the motivations for using social media can inevitably affect the outcome of this relationship. On such a premise, results have scrutinized that entertainment and relationship management are amongst the two prime motivational mediators when it comes to the relationship between EI and social media addiction.

With that being said, and although social media addiction is induced by a multifarious set of behavioral and usage-based archetypes, there are other distinct intermediaries that may or may not alter such virtual phenomena of swaying between the surfeit of either media 'socialization' or media 'overconsumption'. Meaning, even when someone has a low level of EI, it might not necessarily lead to the pathological usage of social media if the motivation for logging into one's social media account is prompted by the provocation of exploring entertainment or to manage and hone both real-life and virtual relationships. Hence, in such a verifiable context, compulsive online behaviors become both less prevalent and efficacious. Withal, the verdicts of this study also support those proposed by Wen et al. (2022), who attempted to punctiliously examine the relationship between a sundry of motivations for social media usage and its interlinkage to a user's wellbeing. Findings auspiciously yielded that the intensity of social media usage motivation is positively associated with users' wellbeing, perceived social support, and positive self-presentation. The findings also indicated that social interaction, entertainment, and information all indirectly affect the well-being of social media users through several disparate mediation paths.

Moving right along, it is deduced that the findings of this study go against those lodged by Wang et al. (2014), who revealed that university students who make use of social media for social interaction have a higher level of social well-being than those who make use of the platform for entertainment purposes as a major harbinger for stimulating online engagement. Besides recurring comparisons and relative research assessments of other similar studies, this scrutiny in particular culminates in the fact that entertainment and relationship management are both significantly associated with social media addiction and concomitantly

moderate the relationship between EI and social media addiction. Similarly, the current findings tend to also contradict those suggested by Guo et al. (2014), who concluded that users of both 'Weibo' and 'Facebook', who tend to exclusively view these platforms as information-generating media and the crux of social connectivity and 'virtual cultivation' exhibited substantial levels of social nurturement, compared to those who made use of such platforms for merely entertainment motives.

It is, however, worth noting that there is a dearth of empirical studies that specifically look at the relationship between EI and social media addiction and how to use motivations to mediate this relationship. Wen et al. (2022) also alluded to this in their latest work on the subject of social media use motivations and social media users' behavior, by explaining that there is indeed a scarcity of extensive studies focusing on social media addiction and social media use motivations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study intends to examine the relationship between EI and social media addiction as well as the role of use motivations (entertainment, information, relationship management, and self-expression) in mediating this relationship. That being said, the results vindicate that EI is inversely related to social media addiction. Furthermore, it is also demonstrated how facets like entertainment, relationship building, and maintenance in fact moderate the relationship between EI and social media addiction. Finally, it was all in all proven that communication and self-expression as use motivations do not necessarily mediate the relationship between EI and social media addiction.

Based on the methodological direction and findings of this study, it is recommended for future studies to include the type of use (active or passive use) of social media among the variables studied. The current study has not taken into consideration how social media users make use of a platform instead of choosing to focus on their motivations for use. Additionally, by including this variable, it will be easier to confirm whether this factor also contributes to social media addiction when considered in line with motivations for use.

Furthermore, subsequent studies can consider comparing social media users from various countries, socioeconomic groups, and demographic characteristics, which will aid in further isolating the main predictors of social media addiction. For instance, are one's social media use motivations influenced by determinants like culture, customs, traditions, background, country of origin, and other demographic attributes?

Indeed, delving into the role of such socio-psychological agents in sculpting user behavioral motivations on social platforms, carves the way for fathoming the impact of upbringing and culture in the ways which individuals make use of social media, and hence the rationale of them falling into the spiderweb of obsessive online behavior and social media addiction. Synonymously, grasping concepts like cultural predominance and the shaping of intellects also opens the door for a novel branch of media research, which includes whether culture and inherited traditions can determine a group's EI or not, and if so, how can such a notion impact our ideology of social media presence, the persona we tend to paint for ourselves, and hence our overall 'virtual-etiquettes'?

Nonetheless, these are strata of the quality of mind-provoking questions that this study primarily intends to shed light on and help answer. Especially because, by carrying out studies within such a context, a more holistic view of the dogma of EI, social media use motivations, and social media users' behavior can be achieved and consequently addressed through utilizing both related existing research as well as a completely 'avant-garde' approach that aims to blend behavioral-focused research with relevant topics like media literacy, socio-cultural endurance, and the conjugation of attributes like cognitivity, psychoanalysis, and mental stimulation in a contemporary virtual world, and hence the continuous evolvement of human EI in the midst of a technological over-bombardment of new media; and all in all, how these combining strands contribute to shaping the modern social media user, who is typically stretched between quarrelling with a scattered state of mind; utterly lured by a dilemma of 'online pleasure psychosis' and employing one's natural EI and congenital human rational and reasoning to prevent social media obsession, all of which are perpetually wrapped up under the suffocating blanket of an unbounded virtual universe; a game of man vs. the hamster wheel of virtual detachment, non-longingness, resistance, temptations, and finally surrendering to social media's addictive typhoons.

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