More than 210 million people in the world suffer from addiction to social media and the Internet (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017).

Research has shown that Instagram has filters to “enhance photos and these images of others can lead to poor psychological well-being” (Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2018).

Individuals with low self-esteem “need to compensate for their need for real-time interactions for social media connections” (Kircaburun et al., 2019).

There are many social media ads, posts, and marketing tactics that influence consumers to purchase e-cigarettes (Sawdey et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between social media, mental health, self-esteem, and substance use among college students.

Furthermore, the analysis of these participants will provide essential information and data to address the impact of social media.

Hypotheses:
1. There will not be a statistically significant difference in social media use between substance use issues among college students.
2. There will be a statistically significant difference in social media use between age, gender, and race/ethnicity regarding mental health and self-esteem.
3. There will be a statistically significant difference in gender differences due to social media filters affecting self-esteem.

METHODS

Participants:
162 undergrads enrolled at a Kentucky university.

Survey:
Social Media Use Among University Students (SMUUS); 24-item survey was developed by our researchers that measures possible relationships between social media use, mental health, self-esteem, and substance use.

4 demographic questions and 20 questions regarding social media platforms preferred, social media usage, social media engagement, mental health attitudes and views, self-esteem attitudes and views, and viewing social media posts or ads that could influence substance misuse.

The survey was distributed through both in-person and online recruitment.

Data Analysis:
Descriptive statistics, Chi-square test of independence, and Spearman rank correlation were used for the statistical analyses on the latest version of Jamovi software.

P-value was set at the 0.05 significant level for this analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

162 students participated in this study.

80.75% (n=130) female, 19.25% (n=32) male.

A chi-square test of independence showed that there is a significant difference between race and social media affects mental health, X2 (20, N = 159) = 31.7, p = .047, which means there is a strong association between race and how social media affects mental health.

Most strongly agree or agree responses among race were represented by 85.8% (n=6) One or more races, 66.7% (n=2) Latino/Hispanic, 56.5% (n=9) White/Caucasian, 17.6% (n=3) Black/African-American.

There is a significant difference between age and social media affects mental health, X2 (32, N = 158) = 60.5, p = .002, which means there is a strong association between age and how social media affects mental health.

Most strongly agree or agree responses among age were represented by 75% (n=3) 25 years old, 60% (n=21) 20 years old, 58.6% (n=17) 19 years old, and 56% (n=14) 21 years old.

H1: No statistical significance (p > .05) between increased social media use and substance use.

H2: Statistical significance (p < .05) between age and race among mental health and self-esteem. Gender had no statistical significance (p > .05).

H3: No statistical significance between gender and social media filters, X2 (8, N = 158) = 15.2, p = .056.

The limitations of this study included time sample size, and demographics among race and gender.

IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Further research should be conducted to explore the relationship between social media, social media ads, and the influence on substance use among college students.

Research should include a larger sample size to ensure more accurate findings and possible trends.

More educational interventions are needed on college campuses that address the negative impact social media may have on self-esteem and substance use.

REFERENCES


