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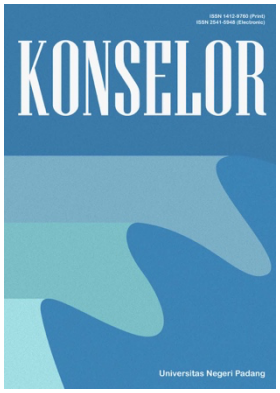

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Self-Awareness and Self-Control: Protective Factors Against Social Media Addiction Tendency among Adolescents

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Self-Awareness and Self-Control: Protective Factors Against Social Media Addiction Tendency among Adolescents

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Abstract: The tendency toward social media addiction is an increasingly prevalent phenomenon, especially among adolescents. High levels of social media use among adolescents may cause various negative impacts, both psychologically and socially. Self-awareness and self-control are associated with the tendency toward social media addiction. Based on this, the present study aims to analyze the influence of self-awareness and self-control on the tendency toward social media addiction among adolescents in Bangka Belitung. The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method. Participants (n = 470) were adolescents aged 13–19 years residing in Bangka Belitung, with daily social media use either less than or greater than three hours. The sample included 180 males (38.3%) and 290 females (61.7%). Age distribution was 13–15 years (n = 170, 36.2%), 16–18 years (n = 140, 29.8%), and 19 years (n = 160, 34.0%). Three psychological scales were used as the instruments: the social media addiction tendency scale based on indicators from Young and Abreu (2017), the self-awareness scale based on the model by Carden et al. (2021), and the self-control scale based on Averill's theory (Averill, 1973). Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, both simultaneously and partially, to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that self-awareness significantly influenced the tendency toward social media addiction, as did self-control, which also showed a significant influence. Furthermore, self-awareness and self-control simultaneously had a significant effect on the tendency toward social media addiction among adolescents. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening self-awareness and self-control as key psychological factors in preventing social media addiction. Future studies are expected to employ a longitudinal approach or expand the scope of regions and participant age ranges.

Key Words: Adolescents; Self-awareness; Self-control; Tendency toward social media addiction

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology in recent decades has significantly influenced patterns of human interaction and social organization. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has introduced artificial intelligence (AI), big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT), shaping a network society in which people live within an unlimited and massive flow of digital information (Bongomin et al., 2020; Tsaramirsis et al., 2022). One of the most prominent implications of this transformation is the emergence of social media, which has become the primary arena for communication, entertainment, and identity formation, particularly among adolescents (Bühler et al.,

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2022; Butler, 2024). In Indonesia, including Bangka Belitung, adolescents are recorded as the group with the highest intensity of social media use, in line with increasing internet penetration and the shifting patterns of social interaction (Toharudin et al., 2024).

Although social media brings benefits in terms of expanding social networks, providing learning opportunities, and serving as a medium for self-expression, excessive use has the potential to cause serious problems. Adolescents often display symptoms of social media addiction such as compulsive use, anxiety when disconnected, and disruptions to academic and social activities (Throuvala et al., 2021; Watson et al., 2022). Studies indicate that the average duration of social media use among Indonesian adolescents exceeds three hours per day, which serves as an indicator of addictive behavior (Siste et al., 2021). In Bangka Belitung, the scarcity of public places and entertainment amenities encourages teenagers to rely more on social media as their primary mode of engagement (Damayanti & Ferdiana, 2020; Faradiba et al., 2024). This problem is made worse by poor self-control and not being aware of how digital involvement will affect them in the long run (Biedermann et al., 2021; Endert, 2021), which could lead to worse mental health, less focus on learning, and less face-to-face interaction (Stieger et al., 2023).

To deal with these problems, we need to work systematically to help them become more aware of themselves and improve their self-control. Self-awareness helps teens recognize their own urges and understand the consequences of their actions, which enables them to regulate their social media use more effectively (Mertens et al., 2022; Müller et al., 2023). Self-control serves as a psychological system that governs behavior, curbs immediate impulses, and steers social media use towards more constructive objectives (Zahrai et al., 2022). Digital literacy education, parental engagement in adaptive parenting techniques, the establishment of alternative creative spaces for coastal adolescents, and community intervention programs supported by the government are pragmatic alternatives (Banić & Orehovački, 2024; Ziker et al., 2025).

“This research is theoretically based on the Uses and Gratifications 2.0 paradigm (Puspadini et al., 2023), which posits that active users pursue gratifications through entertainment, social connections, and stress alleviation. Within this framework, self-awareness becomes essential for assessing individual motivations. Bandura’s self-regulation theory further explains that self-control involves not only resisting urges but also aligning behavior with personal objectives and values (Bandura, 1991). Prior studies indicate that self-awareness enhances self-control and helps mitigate excessive social media use (Kalinin & Edguer, 2023). Louderback & Antonaccio (2021) also highlight self-control as comprising behavioral, cognitive, and decision-making dimensions, which are increasingly relevant for regulating digital interactions. Together, these perspectives emphasize that the propensity for addiction is shaped not only by the duration of use but also by the quality of emotional engagement and the underlying psychological processes (Jo & Baek, 2023; Pera, 2020).

This research parallels the findings of Sun et al. (2025), which emphasize the significance of self-control as a protective factor against online addiction, both demonstrating that self-regulation may mitigate inclinations towards digital addiction. It is also consistent with Agbaria (2023), which demonstrated that enhancing self-control by cognitive-behavioral therapies may reduce internet addiction among teenagers, so underscoring the significance of fortifying psychological dimensions. Additionally, this research pertains to Erzincanli & Geçikli (2024), who highlighted self-awareness (conscious awareness/mindfulness) as a component affecting digital addiction.. Thus, all three previous studies and this research share the same thread, namely positioning internal psychological factors such as self-control, self-awareness, and mindfulness as key determinants in understanding and preventing digital addiction.

The difference between this study and Sun et al. (2025) lies in the independent variables: Yan Sun examined physical activity and internet addiction with self-control as a mediator, whereas this study directly tests self-awareness and self-control as predictors of social media addiction. Agbaria (2023) investigated the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral interventions among Arab-Israeli adolescents with high levels of addiction, while this study employs a survey design to analyze addiction tendencies in the general adolescent population of Bangka Belitung. Erzincanli & Geçikli (2024) explored self-awareness (mindfulness) and Big Five traits in predicting digital addiction, but this study focuses on self-awareness within adolescent developmental psychology without including personality dimensions.

Based on this foundation, the study aims to analyze the influence of self-awareness and self-control on the tendency toward social media addiction among adolescents in Bangka Belitung. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of two protective variables, self-awareness and self-control, as predictors of social media addiction among Indonesian adolescents. While previous studies emphasized behavioral interventions, physical activity, or personality traits, this study highlights adolescents' internal psychological factors as the core of prevention in the context of social media use. Thus, this research enriches the literature with empirical evidence from the Indonesian cultural context, while also providing a basis for preventive strategies that strengthen adolescents' self-awareness and self-control.

The contributions are expected to cover theoretical aspects, namely enriching the social psychology literature on adolescent digital behavior, as well as practical aspects in the form of recommendations for adolescents, parents, academics, and policymakers. The findings can provide new insights into the importance of maintaining digital well-being, serve as a reference for parents in adaptive parenting, form a basis for developing psychosocial intervention models for academics, and act as a consideration for the government in designing youth-oriented digital literacy policies. Thus, this research has the potential to make a practical contribution to preventing tendencies toward social media addiction while fostering a healthier digital culture in Bangka Belitung and Indonesia more broadly.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the theoretical relationships among self-awareness, self-control, and social media addiction tendencies, using statistical analysis (Ciacchini et al., 2023). Methodological details are provided below to enable evaluation and replication.

Participants

Participants were adolescents residing in the Bangka Belitung Islands, Indonesia, who met the following inclusion criteria: (a) aged 13–19 years; (b) male or female; (c) active social media users with daily duration of less than three hours or three hours or more; and (d) permanent residents of Bangka Belitung. The minimum age of 13 was based on platform policy and ethical considerations (e.g., COPPA), as well as cognitive development, since children under 13 are typically under parental supervision and lack sufficient reflective capacity to independently complete self-report measures (Green et al., 2021), of 471 respondents, one was excluded for not providing informed consent, leaving 470 participants in the final sample. No incentives were provided. Demographic questions (name, gender, education, domicile, duration of social media use, and reasons for use) were optional, with a "N/A" response available. Ethical approval was obtained from the Komite Etik Penelitian KPIN (Konsorsium Psikologi Ilmiah Nusantara), No. 222/2025 Etik/KPIN, dated June 11, 2025.

Sampling Procedures

Data collection was conducted remotely (online) from June 17–22, 2025. Participants completed the questionnaire once using their own devices in natural settings such as their home, school, or community. All participants resided in the Bangka Belitung Province, either on Bangka Island or Belitung Island. No personal identifiers were required in the questionnaire to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained prior to completion, and no financial compensation was provided to respondents. Considering logistical limitations and the target of reaching active adolescent users, the study employed non-probability convenience sampling (Gravetter et al., 2021). Recruitment was carried out online through posts and shared Google Form links distributed via Instagram and WhatsApp. Based on population data for adolescents in Bangka Belitung (N = 246,970), the target sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula:

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$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$$

At a 5% margin of error, the sample size calculation produced n ≈ 399.35 (rounded to 400). The achieved sample (N = 470) exceeded this minimum and was consistent with recommendations for multivariate analysis (e.g., ≥100; Hair et al., 2014).

Instrumentation

All research instruments were administered through Google Forms. Data completed by participants were exported to Microsoft Excel for cleaning and subsequently analyzed using JASP version 0.19.3.0. The dependent variable was social media addiction tendency (Y), measured using the Internet Addiction Test framework by Young et al. (2017), adapted to the social media context by Astri, (2021). This instrument consisted of 24 items covering six main dimensions: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse. Responses were given on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Inappropriate to 4 = Strongly Appropriate), with a combination of favorable and unfavorable items. Higher total scores indicated a greater tendency toward addiction. In this study sample, all items were valid with item–total correlations ranging from 0.515 to 0.615 (minimum threshold ≥0.300), and reliability was excellent (α = 0.926).

The first independent variable was self-awareness (X1), measured using a 26-item scale developed based on Carden et al. (2022) and further refined through a scale-construction course by the research team. The instrument comprised intrapersonal dimensions (self-knowledge, emotional regulation, acting in line with competence) and interpersonal dimensions (interaction, communication, collaboration, empathy). Responses were given on a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating better self-awareness. All items were valid with item–total correlations between 0.706 and 0.788, and reliability was excellent (α = 0.972).

The second independent variable was self-control (X2), measured using a 12-item scale adapted from Averill's model of behavioral, cognitive, and decisional control (Averill, 1973), as modified by Astri, (2021). This instrument also used a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting stronger self-control. Validity testing showed item–total correlations of 0.706–0.751, with excellent reliability (α = 0.941). For descriptive interpretation, the total scores of each variable were categorized into three levels based on theoretical ranges: (a) social media addiction tendency: 24–48 = low, 49–72 = moderate, 73–96 = high; (b) self-awareness: 26–52 = low, 53–78 = moderate, 79–104 = high; and (c) self-control: 12–24 = low, 25–36 = moderate, 37–48 = high. This categorization enabled the researchers to systematically identify the distribution of addiction tendencies and participants' psychological characteristics.

Procedures

Participants accessed the survey link, read the information sheet, and provided electronic informed consent before proceeding. They then followed the sequence, which included eligibility verification, demographic questions (optional, with a "N/A" choice), and three psychometric scales covering social media addiction, self-awareness, and self-control. The process took approximately 10–15 minutes on average, with the restriction that each participant could only submit one response. No performance tasks or manipulations were involved in this study, so the researchers' role was limited to distributing the survey link, monitoring completeness, and ensuring that inclusion criteria were met. The study variables consisted of the total score of social media addiction tendency (Y) as the dependent variable and self-awareness (X1) and self-control (X2) as independent variables, with all predictors measured rather than experimentally manipulated or group-assigned. From an ethical perspective, this research obtained ethical clearance from KPIN (No. 222/2025). Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents retained the right to skip questions or withdraw at any time without consequence. Consent was required to proceed, while anonymity was maintained by removing personal identifiers and storing raw data without names or IDs. In addition, the platform's age requirement (≥13 years) was enforced at the outset to ensure eligibility.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved several interrelated steps to ensure the validity and interpretability of results. First, each research variable score was categorized into three levels (low, moderate, high) based on the theoretical ranges of the instruments. Next, descriptive statistical tests were conducted to provide a summary of the data distribution. Prior to running multiple regression, classical assumption tests were performed, including normality testing using Shapiro–Wilk, multicollinearity testing using VIF and tolerance values, heteroscedasticity testing through scatterplots, Glejser, or Breusch–Pagan, and autocorrelation testing using Durbin–Watson. Once all assumptions were met, the regression model was tested simultaneously using the F-test to assess the joint significance of the independent variables. The main analysis employed multiple linear regression with the assistance of JASP, where the effects of self-awareness and self-control on social media addiction tendency were analyzed based on regression coefficients and significance values ($p < 0.05$). Consistent with the research objectives, the hypotheses tested were that:

Hypothesis 1: $H1_o$: There is no significant effect of self-awareness on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung. and $H1_a$: There is a significant effect of self-awareness on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung.

Hypothesis 2: $H2_o$: There is no significant effect of self-control on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung, and $H2_a$: There is a significant effect of self-control on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung.

Hypothesis 3: $H3_o$: There is no significant joint effect of self-awareness and self-control on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung and $H3_a$: There is a significant joint effect of self-awareness and self-control on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung.

RESULTS

Overview of Participants' Demographic Characteristics

A total of 471 participants were collected, but only 470 met the research criteria.

Table 1. Overview of Participants' Demographic Characteristics

No	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Female	290	61.5 %
	Male	180	38.5 %
2	Age Range		
	13–15 years	170	36.2 %
	16–18 years	140	29.8 %
	19 years	160	34 %
3	Residence		
	Bangka	250	52.9 %
	Belitung	220	47.1 %
4	Education Level		
	Junior High School	162	34.2 %
	Senior High School	207	43.8 %
	University	101	22 %
5	Duration of Social Media Use		
	> 6 hours	285	60.6 %
	4–6 hours	119	25.3 %
	1–3 hours	58	12.3 %
	< 1 hours	8	1.7 %

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No	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
6	Types of Social Media		
	TikTok	327	69.1 %
	Instagram	296	63 %
	WhatsApp	288	61.3 %
	Twitter/X	135	28.8 %
	YouTube	125	26.6 %
	Facebook	94	20.1 %
	Game Online	2	1 %

A total of 471 respondents were collected, but only 470 met the research criteria. The majority were female (61.5%) compared to male (38.5%). The age distribution was relatively balanced: 13–15 years (36.2%), 16–18 years (29.8%), and 19 years (34%). Respondents came almost equally from Bangka (52.9%) and Belitung (47.1%). In terms of education, most were senior high school students (43.8%), followed by junior high school students (34.2%) and university students (22%). More than half of the respondents (60.6%) used social media for more than 6 hours per day. The dominant platform was TikTok (69.1%), followed by Instagram (63%) and WhatsApp (61.3%).

Social Media Addiction Tendencies, Self-Awareness, and Self-Control

As shown in Table 2 the majority of adolescents showed a tendency toward moderate social media addiction (84.1%), with 14% in the low category and 1.9% in the high category. The highest level of self-awareness was also in the moderate category (62.1%), while 32.1% were classified as high and 5.8% as low. For self-control, 65.5% were in the moderate category, 22.3% in the low category, and only 12.2% in the high category. These data indicate that adolescents in Bangka Belitung generally possess adequate levels of self-awareness and self-control; however, their intensity of social media use remains high.

Table 2. Overview of Social Media Addiction Tendencies, Self-Awareness, and Self-Control

Category	Score Norm	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media Addiction Tendencies	24–48	Low	66	14 %
	49 – 72	Moderate	395	84.1%
	73 – 96	High	9	1.9 %
Self Awareness	26 – 52	Low	27	5.8 %
	53 – 78	Moderate	292	62.1 %
	79 – 104	High	151	32.1 %
Self-Control	12 – 24	Low	105	22.3 %
	25 – 36	Moderate	308	65.5 %
	37 – 48	High	57	12.2 %

Assumption Tests

The classical assumption tests in this study began with the normality test using the Shapiro–Wilk method on three variables: social media addiction tendency, self-awareness, and self-control. The analysis results showed that the significance values (p-values) for each variable were 0.079, 0.087, and 0.379, all of which were greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data were normally distributed, as there were no significant deviations from a normal distribution. Thus, the normality assumption was met, and the data were suitable for parametric analysis. Next, the multicollinearity test was conducted to ensure that self-awareness and self-control, the independent variables, were not highly correlated with each other. The findings indicated a tolerance value of 0.999 (> 0.10) and a VIF value of 1.001 (< 10). These results affirm the absence of multicollinearity, indicating that both independent variables may be included simultaneously in the multiple regression model without mutual distortion. After that, the heteroscedasticity test was examined through a scatterplot of the residuals and predictor factors. The observations showed that the residual points were spread out randomly, with no clear pattern, suggesting

constant variance. This indicates no evidence of heteroscedasticity, meaning that the regression model meets the assumption of homoscedasticity (Figure 1).

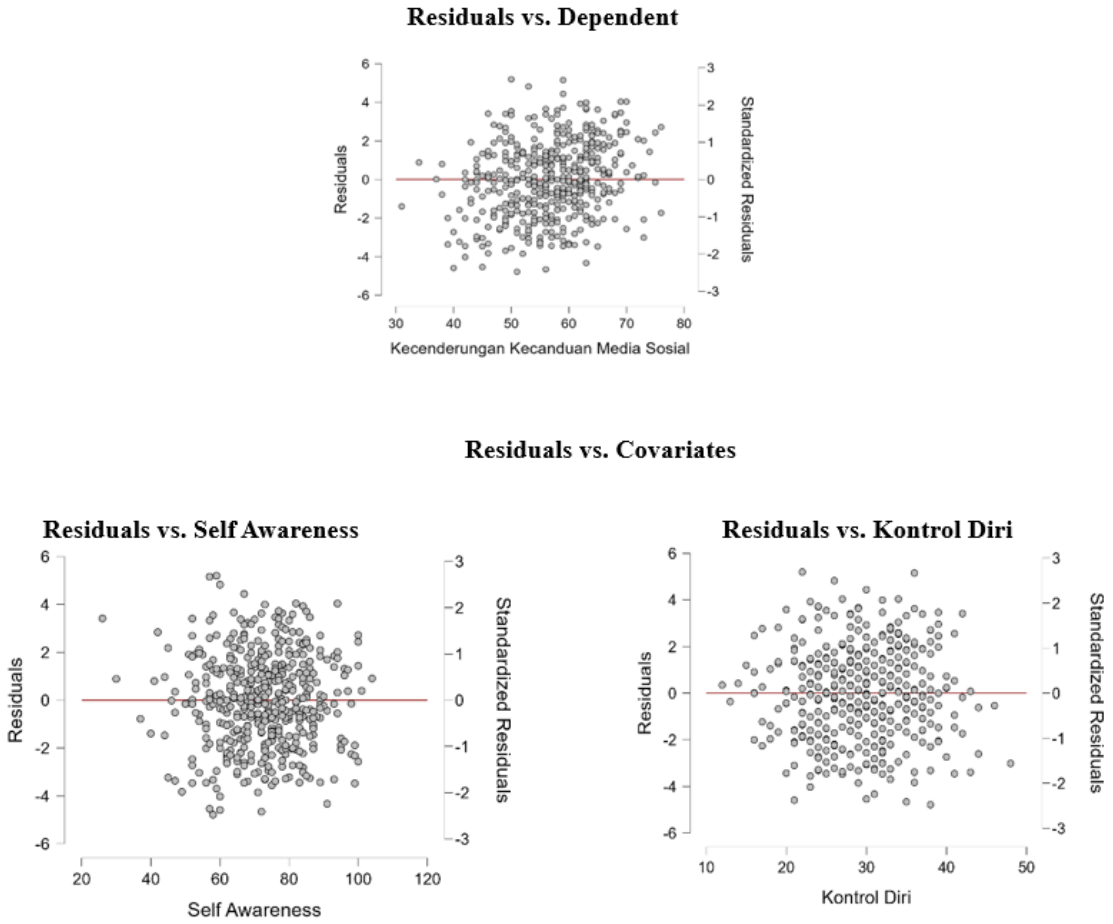

Figure 1. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test Based on Scatterplot

Finally, the autocorrelation test using the Durbin–Watson method produced a DW value of 2.061. This value falls within the range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that the regression model is free from autocorrelation among residuals. Taken together, the overall classical assumption tests demonstrated that the regression model in this study meets the requirements of normality, shows no multicollinearity, is free from heteroscedasticity, and remains stable without autocorrelation, thereby ensuring that the regression analysis results can be interpreted validly.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Test

Variable	Unstandardized	Standardized	t	p	F	Sig. F
Intercept	-0.605	-	159.127	-0.870	3518.197	< .001
Self Awaraness	0.502	0.814	70.503	< .001		
Self-Control	0.718	0.553	47.904	<. 001		

The multiple linear regression analysis showed that self-awareness had a regression coefficient of 0.502 with $p < .001$. This indicates that self-awareness is positively and significantly associated with social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung. Similarly, the regression coefficient for self-control was 0.718 with $p < .001$, suggesting a positive and significant association with social media addiction tendency. Both independent variables together also had a strong joint effect

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on social media addiction tendency, as indicated by the F value of 3518.197 with a significance level of $p < .001$. This research used a multiple linear regression equation:

$$\mathbf{Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2}$$

Explanation:
X_1 = Self-Awareness
X_2 = Self-Control
Y = Social Media Addiction Tendency

Thus, the multiple regression equation is as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = -0.605 + 0.502X_1 + 0.718X_2}$$

The constant (–0.605) implies that if both predictors were zero, the projected value of social media addiction tendency would be negative. Each one-unit increase in self-awareness is associated with a 0.502 increase in social media addiction tendency, while each one-unit increase in self-control is associated with a 0.718 increase.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Test by Dimension

Variable	Dimensions	Unstandardized	Standardized	t	p
	Intercept	-0.654		-0.936	0.350
Self Awareness	Intrapersonal	0.493	0.378	10.781	< .001
	Interpersonal	0.510	0.448	12.756	< .001
	Behavioral Control	0.697	0.192	7.666	< .001
Self Control	Cognitive Control	0.804	0.214	8.750	< .001
	Decision Control	0.655	0.177	6.632	< .001

Table 4 shown all dimensions of self-awareness (intrapersonal and interpersonal) and self-control (behavioral, cognitive, and decision) were *positively and significantly related* to social media addiction tendencies. This strengthens the counter-intuitive nature of the findings, because theoretically, higher self-awareness and self-control are expected to mitigate addiction, yet here they appear to *increase* the risk.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix Test Between Variables

No	Variable	Social Media Addiction Tendency	Self Awareness	Self-Control
1	Social Media Addiction Tendency	—	—	—
2	Self Awareness	Pearson's r = 0.795	—	
		p-value < 0.001	—	
3	Self-Control	Pearson's r = 0.524	r = -0.036	—
		p-value < 0.001	p = 0.438	—

Table 5 shown the correlation analysis further confirmed significant positive relationships between both self-awareness ($r = 0.795$, $p < .001$) and self-control ($r = 0.524$, $p < .001$) with social media addiction tendency. Meanwhile, the relationship between self-awareness and self-control was negligible and nonsignificant ($r = -0.036$, $p = 0.438$).The findings of this study are counterintuitive, as they contradict the theoretical framework that conceptualizes self-awareness and self-control as protective factors. Several possible explanations can be considered. First, within the socio-cultural context of Bangka Belitung, higher self-awareness may encourage adolescents to engage more actively in self-presentation and impression management through social media. Second, greater self-control may create a belief that one's usage remains under control, while in reality it promotes more intensive engagement. Third, the multidimensional complexity of these constructs may operate differently in digital environments, thereby reinforcing, rather than reducing, addictive tendencies. Thus, although the results are statistically robust, these findings highlight a counterintuitive and context-dependent relationship that requires deeper theoretical and cultural interpretation.

DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics showed that the majority of participants were female adolescents (61.5%), with a relatively balanced age distribution, although the 13–15 age group was slightly larger (36.2%). Most participants resided in Bangka (52.9%) and were high school students (43.8%). Social media use was relatively intensive, with 60.6% of adolescents accessing it for more than six hours per day, dominated by TikTok (69.1%), followed by Instagram and WhatsApp. These data indicate a strong attachment to social media platforms oriented toward fast-paced visual entertainment. This is consistent with national trends, where Indonesian teenagers are the most active social media users and short video–based platforms are dominant (Vassey et al., 2025). Previous studies also show that females are generally more engaged in sharing, observing, and interacting on social media than males (Gkikas et al., 2022). Moreover, prolonged daily use, especially beyond six hours, has been associated with heightened risk of addiction and diminished self-regulation (Martínez et al., 2025).

An analysis of the study variables revealed that the majority of adolescents fell into the moderate category for social media addiction (84.1%), self-awareness (62.1%), and self-control (65.5%). However, a substantial proportion (22.3%) exhibited low self-control, reflecting challenges in regulating their online behavior. While prior studies have often positioned self-awareness and self-control as protective factors against digital addiction ((Bozzola et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024), the results of this study contradict such assumptions.

The regression analysis demonstrated that both self-awareness ($b_1 = 0.502$, $p < .001$) and self-control ($b_2 = 0.718$, $p < .001$) had significant positive effects on social media addiction tendencies. Rather than functioning as buffers, higher levels of self-awareness and self-control were linked to greater addictive symptoms. This unexpected outcome may reflect contextual dynamics: adolescents with higher self-awareness may use social media intensively for self-expression and identity-seeking, while those with strong perceived self-control may feel confident in managing their usage, even when their patterns suggest dependency. In other words, these psychological attributes may act less as protective mechanisms and more as justifications for maintaining high engagement in entertainment-driven platforms.

These findings diverge from international evidence. A meta-analysis by Li et al. (2021) reported a negative relationship between self-control and internet/social media addiction ($r \approx –0.36$), while impulsivity showed a positive association ($r \approx 0.37$). Similarly, Cudo et al. (2020) found that higher self-control correlated with lower levels of Facebook addiction. The contrast suggests that the role of self-control may vary across cultural and contextual settings: in Bangka Belitung, adolescents' subjective sense of control may paradoxically reinforce continued engagement rather than curbing excessive use. The correlation between self-awareness and self-control in this study was not significant ($r = –0.036$, $p = 0.438$), indicating that the two variables operated independently. This contrasts with some prior studies that conceptualized self-awareness as enhancing self-control to reduce problematic media use (Piccerillo & Digennaro, 2025). The present results highlight the complexity of adolescent psychology in the digital era, where constructs traditionally seen as protective may not operate as expected.

The strength of this study lies in its focus on adolescents in Bangka Belitung, with a relatively large sample size ($N = 470$) spanning multiple age groups. Unlike prior research that emphasized physical activity (Sun et al., 2025) (Y. Sun et al., 2025), cognitive-behavioral interventions (Agbaria, 2023), or mindfulness (Erzincanli & Geçikli, 2024), this study simultaneously examined self-awareness and self-control in their natural behavioral context. The contradictory direction of the findings enriches international discourse, underscoring that psychological constructs do not uniformly serve as protective factors but may function differently depending on cultural and developmental contexts. Several limitations must be noted. First, the study relied on self-report questionnaires, which may introduce biases such as social desirability or misinterpretation of items. Second, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences; intensive social media use might shape self-awareness and self-control just as much as the reverse. Third, the cultural specificity of Bangka Belitung adolescents may restrict generalizability to other regions or populations. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs, multiple measurement methods, and cross-cultural comparisons to clarify the directionality of these relationships.

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The findings suggest important implications for school counseling and educational practice. Counselors and educators should not assume that adolescents with high self-awareness or self-control are automatically protected from problematic digital use. Instead, interventions should help students critically reflect on how these traits are applied, ensuring that self-awareness supports healthy identity formation rather than reinforcing online dependency, and that self-control is directed toward setting realistic limits rather than rationalizing prolonged use. Programs integrating digital literacy, peer support, and emotional regulation training could help align psychological strengths with healthier online behavior. Additionally, school counseling services should adopt more contextualized strategies, recognizing the local cultural meanings attached to self-control and self-awareness in adolescents' digital lives.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that self-awareness and self-control had positive and significant effects on social media addiction tendency among adolescents in Bangka Belitung. The regression analysis indicated that higher levels of self-awareness and self-control were associated with a greater likelihood of intensive social media use, even when such use displayed addictive symptoms. These findings challenge the established assumption that self-awareness and self-control function solely as protective factors. Instead, within this context, both constructs appeared to act as mechanisms that sustained adolescents' engagement in digital platforms. By highlighting this counterintuitive relationship, the study contributes to theoretical debates by showing that psychological attributes traditionally considered protective may, under certain socio-cultural conditions, reinforce addictive tendencies. The limitations of this research should be acknowledged. The study was restricted to adolescents in Bangka Belitung, which may limit the generalizability of results to other regions with different socio-cultural characteristics. Furthermore, the reliance on cross-sectional self-report questionnaires introduced the possibility of response bias and did not fully capture the behavioral dynamics underlying social media use. In addition, the high correlations between constructs suggest potential measurement overlap that may have inflated associations.

Future research should therefore broaden the scope by including adolescents from diverse regions and cultural contexts, employ longitudinal designs to examine how addiction tendencies develop over time, and integrate qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to capture the psychosocial dynamics more comprehensively. Incorporating behavioral measures alongside self-reports would also improve construct validity. Overall, this study underscores the importance of contextualizing self-awareness and self-control within adolescent digital behavior, revealing that these psychological factors do not universally serve as protective mechanisms. Instead, their function may vary depending on cultural settings and usage patterns, highlighting the need for interventions that explicitly align self-awareness and self-control with healthier digital practices.

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