



Interrelationship between Social Media Addiction and Mental Health of Emerging Adults

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates interrelationship between independent factors and social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults.

Study Area and Sample: The study was conducted in the Dharwad district of Karnataka State, India. The research was conducted during the year 2020-21. Total study sample consists of 160 students. Around 80 students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected.

Methodology: A general self-structured questionnaires gather information regarding social media usage. Social media addiction tool by Tutgan and Deniz (2015) was used to assess social media addiction and mental health inventory by Jagadish and Srivasthava (1983) was used to assess mental health status.

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Results: Results indicate that age had significant negative correlation with social media and significant positive correlation mental health and education of father had significant positive correlation with social media addiction.

Keywords: Emerging adults; correlation; social media; mental health.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Emerging adulthood is marked by a continued development of cognitive abilities, including advanced problem-solving skills and a more complex understanding of the self and the world. During this stage, individuals often engage in higher-order thinking and reflective processes that contribute to their sense of identity and life direction. Socio-emotional development also plays a crucial role, as emerging adults navigate complex social relationships and develop deeper emotional competencies” [1]. “The rise in the ages of entering higher education, prolonged job instability and marriage reflect the deviations of this new period of life for young people. Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood emerging adults often explore a variety of possible directions” [2]. Arnett [3] “briefed that individuals in this age have the highest rates of residential instability of any age group and they do not regard themselves as fully mature adolescents or adults. In the course of emerging adulthood, young people explore possibilities and move closer to making enduring choices”.

“According to World Health Organization report [4] Mental health is defined as person’s psychological, emotional and social state of wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, act, handle stress and make choices. It also includes depression, anxiety, hopelessness, disappointment, poor decision making, lack of confidence, unable to concentrate on works and occupied with contradictory thoughts” [2]. According to Coyne et al. [5] “increased usage of social media was linked to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem, body surveillance, rejections, loneliness, depression, anxiety and despair all of which were linked to mental health difficulties. Greater time spent on social media was connected with mental health problems among late teens and emerging adults”.

Smart phones are providing millions of emerging adults throughout the world remarkable access to communication, entertainment, education,

knowledge and are helpful in many other ways. According to the report Statista (2016) there were 238.70 million users of smart phones during the year 2015 which increased to 292 million during 2016. Smart phones are playing a big role in connecting people especially teenagers and emerging adults with internet. “For the majority of emerging adults in the age group of 18-25 years social media usage has become the most popular daily activity. Teenagers and young adults are almost universally online. The internet population of young adults has remained the most likely to go online during the last decade” [2].

“The negative effects of social media are also come to the surface when used it excessively. Logging into others accounts, sharing of irrelevant photos and videos, hacking one’s account and lack of privacy in online transactions are some of the biggest concern of internet users. Social media sites are also trying to provide encryption method to save the privacy of the users where the information is closed between the sender and the receiver” [6]. According to Coyne et al. [5] “increased usage of social media was linked to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem, body surveillance, rejections, loneliness, depression, anxiety and despair all of which were linked to mental health difficulties. Greater time spent on social media was connected with mental health problems among late teens and emerging adults”.

Anderson and Jiang [7] “also reported that people who deactivated their Face book accounts for a month reported lower depression and anxiety, as well as increased levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Almost two thirds of emerging adults believe that social media has a negative effect. It is a concern for young adults that excessive use of social media sites will definitely affect their mental health status. Another harmful aspect of social media is cyber bullying that occurs online. As many as 72 per cent of teens experienced cyber bullying at some point in life. It is more strongly correlated with suicide attempts than face-to-face bullying”. Unlike bullying that takes place in-person, victims of online cyber bullying cannot get away

from it which happens without the notice of teachers and parents [8].

1.1 Review of Literature

Review of literature on interrelationship between social media addiction and mental health revealed strong positive association between the both. Kelly et al. [9] “conducted a research to see if social media use is linked to adolescent mental health. The degree of the link between social media use and mental health was shown to be greater for girls than for boys, according to the findings. Increased usage of social media was linked to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem and a negative body image, all of which were linked to increased mental health difficulties”. Reilly et al. [10] “conducted a research to study the effects of social media on the mental health of emerging adults. Results revealed that adolescents perceived social media as a threat to mental wellbeing”. Coyne et al. [5] “also investigated the relationship between time spent on social media and mental health at the intra-individual level over the course of eight years. When analyzed at the intra-individual level, the results demonstrated that greater time spent on social media was not connected with mental health difficulties”. Deepa and Krishna Priya [11] “also reported a link between time spent on social media and the amount of social networking sites used by students and their mental health. More social media use, the quantity of social networking sites used, and too much time spent on social networking sites causes melancholy and anxiety in emerging adults”.

2. METHODOLOGY

The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students both boys and girls studying in arts and science degree colleges. Eighty students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected thus making a final sample of 160 respondents. Inclusion criteria for the selection of sample included emerging adults in age group of 18-25 years attending degree colleges, those who were using android smart phones and having accounts in social media. Frequency, percentages and correlation was used for statistical analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1 shows different social media apps used by emerging adults where cent percent were using

YouTube, followed by Instagram (95.60%), Face book (90.00%), Twitter (75.00%), Skype (58.8%), Messengers (54.00%), Yahoo (51.20%), Quora (43.80%) and LinkedIn (30.00%). In consistent with the results Khurana [12] found that Face book was most used social media app followed by Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Majority spent more time on social media sites to keep in touch with others all over the world. Haneefa [13] also expressed that Face book and YouTube were most popularly used social networking sites and frequently used by emerging adults to chat with their friends online. Similarly Malhotra and Mahskud (2014) revealed that Face book was found to be the most preferred social media app for chatting and making friends and knowing day to day information. Majority were using these social networking sites at night and interact with the opposite sex. They are ignoring their daily activities/responsibilities, hiding online time from others and using these sites secretly.

Fig. 2 shows purpose of different social media sites used by emerging adults where cent percent were using it for communication purpose. Majority were using it for entertainment (90.00%), followed by online shopping (82.50%), browsing (71.90%), motivational (70.60%), knowledge (70.00%) and education (68.80%). In consistent with results Keefe et al. [14] found that social networking sites provide a doorway for instant messaging, entertainment, education, communication and offer opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates and people with shared interests on online. Similarly, Shabir et al. [15] also revealed that social media is used for messaging, entertainment, to get knowledge/information and aids in creating awareness among youth to keeps them updated. Shahjahan and Chisty [16] and Kali (2013) also reported that most of the emerging adults used Face book, YouTube, Twitter, and Skype for communication purpose, to maintain relationships with others, to express their thoughts and opinions.

Results from Table 1 shows that age, no. of apps used, and SES of family had negative correlation with social media addiction of emerging adults. Education of father was positively and significantly correlated with social media addiction of emerging adults. Age was positively and significantly correlated with mental health of emerging adults. No. of apps used was negatively correlated with mental health of emerging adults.

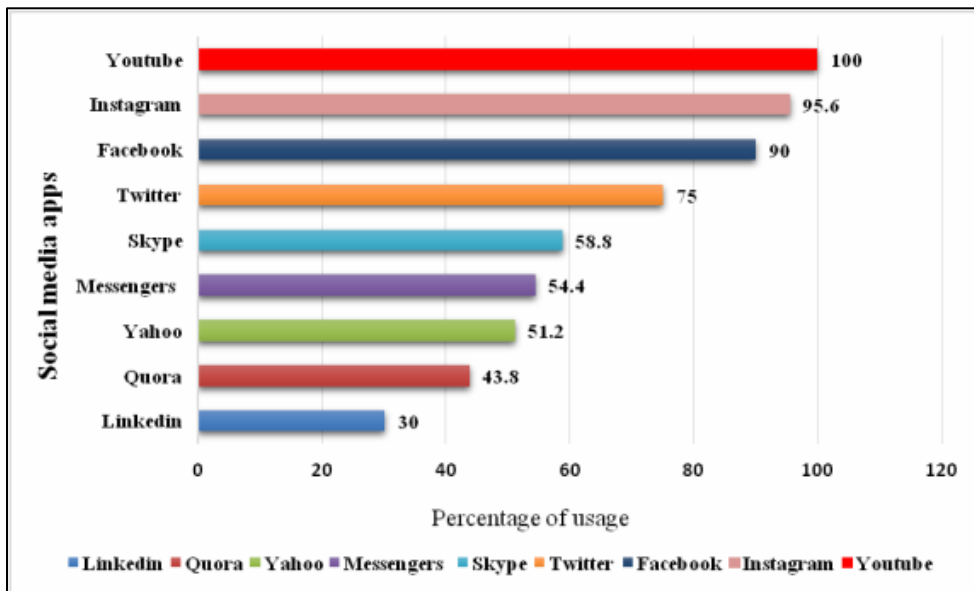


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents according usage of social media sites

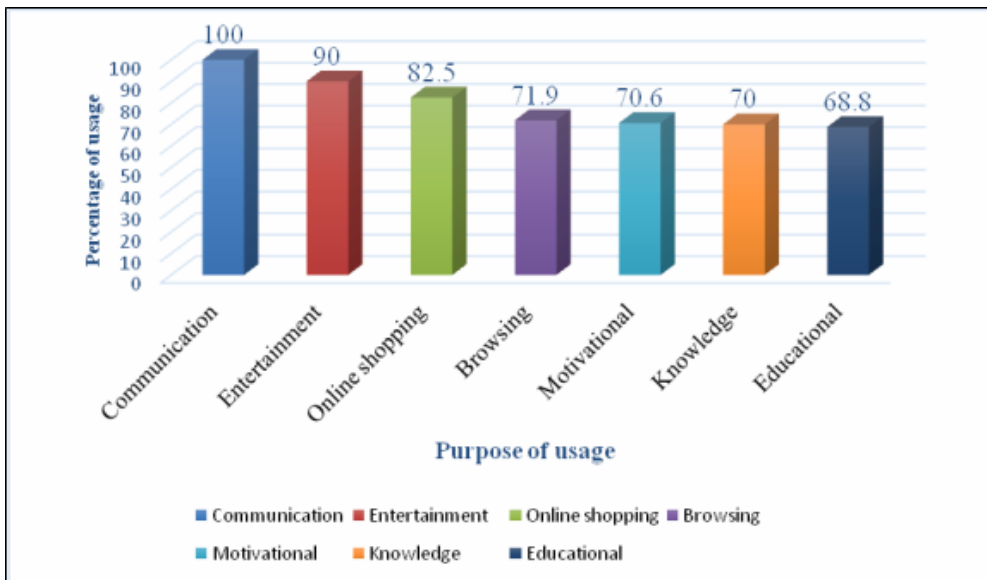


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents according purpose of social media usage

Table 1. Correlation between demographic variables, social media addiction and mental health status

S. no	Independent factors	Social media addiction "r" value	Mental health status "r" value
1.	Age	-0.395**	0.354**
2.	No. of apps used	-0.003	-0.080
3.	Time spent	0.136	0.067
4.	Education of father	0.273**	0.063
5.	Education of mother	0.100	0.090
6.	Occupation of father	0.133	0.059
7.	Occupation of mother	0.054	0.021
8.	SES of family	-0.054	0.033

Table 2. Correlation between social media addiction and mental health status of emerging adults [17]

Sl. No.	Dependent factors	Social media addiction	Mental health status
1	Social media addiction	1	-0.094
2	Mental health status	-0.094	1

“The result from Table 2 shows the relationship between social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults. There was negative correlation between social media addiction and mental health status of emerging adults but it was not significant ($r = -0.094$)” [17]. According to Guo et al. [18] and Coyne et al. [5] “observed that late teens and young adults are using android and iphones and greater time spent on social media resulted in poor intra and interpersonal relationship with peers, anxiety, despair, and mental health problems”. Similarly Deepa and Priya [11] “pointed out that time spent on social media had impact on mental health. More social media use and quantity of social networking sites used causes melancholy and anxiety in emerging adults”.

4. CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the study that emerging adults are using more number of social media sites for different purposes like communication, entertainment and shopping. A significant positive correlation was observed between age and mental health which indicates with increased age higher mental health issues. Age is negatively correlated with social media addiction which indicate that with increased age more the addiction and father education were positively correlated with social media addiction which indicate that with increased fathers education more the social media addiction.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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