



Effect of Social Media Addiction on Mental Health of Emerging Adults

P. Yamini^{1*} and Lata Pujar²

¹Ph.D. Scholar, ²Dean, College of Community Science, UAS, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding author email id: yamisiri123@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In today's world, many of us rely on social media. Though each has its benefits spending too much time on social media can lead to many mental health issues. So the present study on the effect of social media addiction on mental health of emerging adults was conducted in Dharwad district of Karnataka state during the year 2020-21 to assess the social media addiction and its effect on mental health of emerging adults. One hundred and sixty students were selected randomly from arts and science degree colleges of Dharwad city. Data was collected from the students by using self structured questionnaire, social media addiction scale and mental health inventory which gathered information about social media usage, social media addiction and mental health level of emerging adults respectively. Results found that majority were using 1-3 GB of data per day on social media sites and were posting pictures and videos daily on these sites. Majority were using social media without the knowledge of parents by spending more time than desired by ignoring responsibilities. There was a negative relationship between social media addiction and mental health status and using excessive social media has negative effect which is influencing academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Emerging adulthood is a developmental period that spans from the late teens to the twenties, with concentration from ages 18 to 29 years. It is a stage of entering higher education, prolonged job instability and marriage which reflects 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 (Arnett, 2000).

Social media are interactive technologies that allow the creation or sharing and exchange of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. Smart phones are providing millions of emerging adults throughout the world remarkable access to communication, entertainment, education, knowledge. In fast increasing information society, information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a critical role in all parts of our lives, and they have immense potential to

alter the education sector (Singh et al., 2021). According to a study conducted by Pandey et al., (2020), Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, and other social media networking sites can be a real-world distraction. The majority of students are spending a large amount of time on social networking sites on a regular basis. Students are viewing social media as having big negative repercussions such as wasting time on unnecessary activities and health-related difficulties, security and privacy issues, as well as lack of originality. With technology advancements, social media platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook may easily be integrated into delivering content in many formats for agricultural information dissemination as well (Singh et al., 2021).

According to World Health Organization report (2004) 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.

According to Coyne et al., (2019) 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. 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. Kelly et al., (2018) found an association between time spent on social media as well as the number of social media platforms used and mental health problems. The results indicated that time spent on social media is correlated with depression and anxiety which leads to more mental health issues. Different aspects of ICT and media were studied by Ravikumar et al., (2015); Nain et al., (2015); Panda et al., (2019); Nain et al., (2019) and reported different strategies to utilize them effectively. Anderson & Jiang (2018) 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.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Karnataka state during the year 2020-21. A survey research was employed to know the usage pattern of social media among emerging adults. The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students both boys and girls studying in arts and science stream degree colleges of Dharwad city. Total sample for the study comprised of 160 emerging adults, out of which eighty students from two colleges of arts stream studying I & II year and eighty students from two colleges of science stream studying in I year and II year were selected randomly. A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding social media usage of emerging adults like different social media sites used, number of apps used, amount of time spent on social media, GB used per day, purpose of using social media sites, frequency of posting on social media, influence on academic performance, ignoring responsibilities due to over indulgence, whether spending more time than desired and overall impact of social media.

Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) consists of 41 items with five point likert scale graded with the frequency expressions in the range of "Always (5)", "Often (4)", "Sometimes (3)", "Rarely (2)", and "Never (1)". The highest point to be taken from the whole of the scale is 205 and the lowest point is 41. Higher the score indicates increased social media addiction. Mental health inventory consists of 54 statements with four alternative answers like Always, Most of the times, Sometimes and Never, rated on four point scale. Out of 54 statements 23 are positive and 31 are negative. For positive statements the scoring is 4,3,2,1 and for negative statements it is reverse order (1, 2, 3 and 4). The score ranges between 54-216. The high scores on mental health inventory is an indicator of better mental health and vice-versa. The data was gathered personally from students through google forms which were sent to their WhatsApp accounts. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and taken their informed consent

before participation. Students were given instruction about how to fill the questionnaires. They were assured about confidentiality of their responses before filling up the questionnaires and the collected data were scored, tabulated and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, inferential statistics of correlation and results have been presented both in tabular and pictorial format.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The distribution of emerging adults based on usage pattern of social media usage was presented in Table 1. With regard to different social media apps used by emerging adults cent percent were using YouTube, followed by Instagram (95.00%), Face book (90.00%), Twitter (75.00%), Skype (58.12%), Messengers (54.30%), Yahoo (51.25%), Quora (43.75%) and LinkedIn (30.00%). Khurana (2015) found that Face book was most used social media app followed by Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. Majority of emerging adults spent more time on social media sites to keep in touch with friends and family members. YouTube was used by majority for watching videos instantly and to create their own channels and upload videos which can be shared to many viewers. Face book, Instagram and Twitter were widely used by emerging adults which might be because of quick transfer of messages, video calling options, getting daily updates and option of uploading images and videos. Haneefa (2011) also expressed that Face book and YouTube were most popularly used social networking sites and daily used by emerging adults to chat with their friends online.

With regard to number of apps used where 21.85 per cent of the participants used 1-3 apps, 33.78 per cent used 4-6 apps and 44.37 per cent used 7-9 apps. Similarly Bicen & Cavus (2010) revealed that most of the young students were using more number of social media apps such as Face book, YouTube and WhatsApp regularly and spending four hours per day on these sites. In case of time spent on social media it shows that 50.00 per cent of respondents were spending 3-5 hours on social media followed by 23.34 per cent were spending 1-2 hours, 16.66 per cent were spending >5 hours and 10.00 per cent were spending <1 h on social media. Similar results were found in a study conducted by Manjunath (2013) that majority of emerging adults spend significant amount of time on using social networking sites regularly and average time spent was found to be 4-5 hours. With regard to amount of data used majority (65.60%) were using 1-3GB per day, followed by 23.80 per cent were using 500MB-1GB and 10.60 per cent were using 3-5GB. Majority of the emerging adults were using 1-3 GB of data per day for watching different movies, shows and for posting pictures and videos daily and are posting pictures every day on these social media apps about their daily routines, travelling pictures. In frequency of posting on social media majority were posting daily on social media (37.50%), followed by multiple times a day (31.80%), once a week (20.6%) and very few once a month (10.10%).

With respect to influence on academic performance majority (73.10%) expressed that it has negative influence on academic performance and more than one fourth (26.90%) expressed that it has no influence on academic performance. With regard to usage of social media upon instructed by parents not to use majority

Table 1. Distribution based on pattern of social media usage by emerging adults

Particulars	Purpose	Frequency (%)
Social media apps used	YouTube	160 (100.00)
	Instagram	152 (95.00)
	Facebook	144 (90.00)
	Twitter	120 (75.00)
	Skype	93 (58.12)
	Messenger	87 (54.30)
	Yahoo	82 (51.25)
	Quora	70 (43.75)
	LinkedIn	48 (30.00)
Number of apps used	1-3 apps	35 (21.85)
	4-6 apps	54 (33.78)
	7-9 apps	71 (44.37)
Amount of time spent	<1 h	16 (10.00)
	1 2 h	37 (23.34)
	3 5 h	80 (50.00)
	>5 h	27 (16.66)
Daily usage of data	500 MB- 1GB	38 (23.80)
	1-3GB	105 (65.60)
	3-5GB	17 (10.60)
	>5 GB	-
Posting on social media	Multiple times a day	51 (31.80)
	Once in a while/Daily	60 (37.50)
	Once a week	33 (20.60)
	Once a month	16 (10.10)
Influence on academic performance	Yes	117 (73.10)
	No	43(26.90)
Used social media when parent told not to use	Always	103 (64.40)
	Sometimes	25 (15.60)
	Rarely	16 (10.00)
	Never	16 (10.00)
Frustrated when a social media goes down	Always	131 (81.90)
	Sometimes	19 (11.90)
	Rarely	8 (5.00)
	Never	2 (1.20)
Ignored responsibility	Always	59 (36.90)
	Sometimes	50 (31.30)
	Rarely	29 (18.10)
	Never	22 (13.70)
Spend more time on social media than desired	Yes	126 (78.70)
	No	21.3 (21.30)
Impact of social media	Positive impact	38 (23.75)
	Negative impact	65 (40.60)
	No impact	12 (07.50)
	Both positive and negative impact	45 (28.12)

(64.40%) expressed that they always use social media though instructed by parents not to use, followed by sometimes (15.60%), rarely (10.00%) and never (10.00%). In case of getting frustration when social media sites goes down majority (81.90%) expressed that they always gets frustrated when social networking sites goes down, followed by sometimes (11.90%), rarely (5.00%) and never (1.20%).

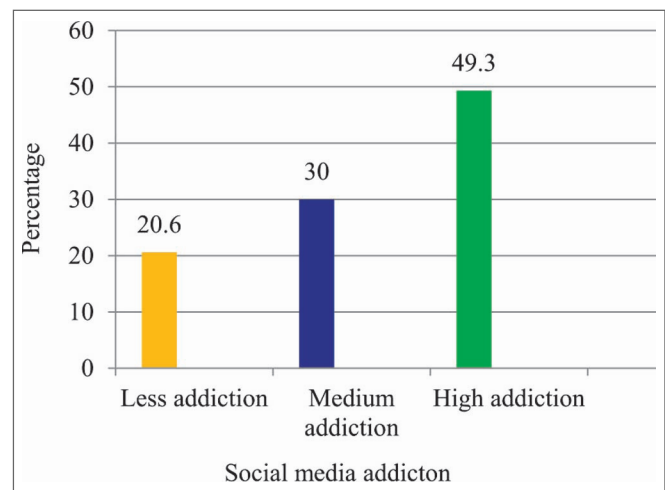
With regard to responsibility, 36.90 per cent expressed that they always ignored responsibility due to over involvement in

social media, followed by sometimes (31.30%), rarely (18.10%) and never (13.70%). With respect to time spent on social media than desired majority (78.70%) expressed they spend more time on social media than desired and 21.30 per cent expressed they do not spend more time on social media than desired. Bholia & Mahakud (2014) reported that majority of the emerging adults were using social media sites at night though restricted by parents and interacted with the opposite sex. They are ignoring their daily activities/responsibilities, hiding online time from others and using these sites secretly.

In overall impact of social media on well being majority expressed it has negative impact (40.60%), followed by both positive and negative impact (28.12%), positive impact (23.75%) and no impact (7.50%). Bhatt & Arshad (2016) also reported that social media has negative impact on youth and adversely affecting their education, behaviours, relationships and daily routine lives and study time of students.

Results pertaining to social media addiction of emerging adults were presented in Figure 1. It was observed that nearly half 49.30 per cent of the respondents fell under high category of social media addiction, followed by 30.00 per cent fell under medium category of social media addiction and 20.60 per cent fell under low category of social media addiction. The reason could be that all emerging adults are using smart phone, they are using more number of social media apps, they were habituated to use it daily by posting pictures and videos on these sites on daily basis. They are also using more data (1-3 GB) per day in watching movies and shows. Results were in line with Kant (2020) who found that most of the college students were addicted to social media such as Face book, Instagram and WhatsApp. They are more actively participating in online activities by spending significant amount of time on social media sites. According to another study Meena et al., (2012) who revealed that with the ever-increasing popularity of social media, emerging adults are devoting significant time to social networking on websites and are prone to get 'addicted' to such form of online social interaction.

Figure 2 presents the overall distribution of emerging adults by their level of mental health. From the figure it can be observed

**Figure 1.** Overall distribution of respondents according to social media addiction

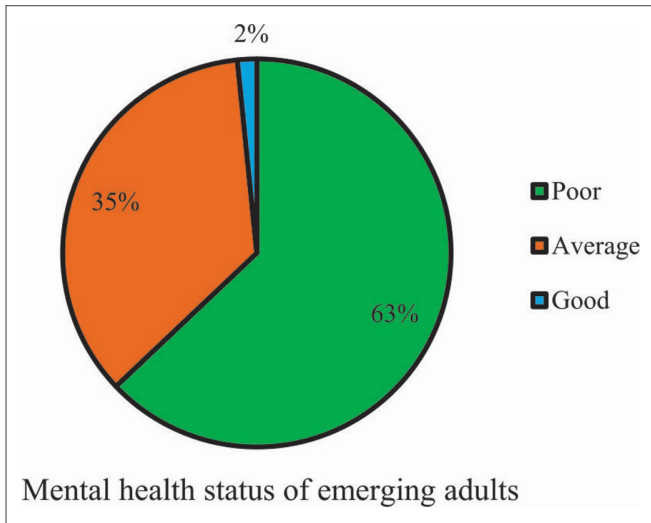


Figure 2. Overall mental health status of the respondents

that 63.00 per cent of the respondents had poor level of mental health followed by 35.00 per cent had average mental health and 2.00 per cent had good level of mental health. The probable reason could be that high involvement in social media, where respondents expressed that high social media is influencing academics in negative way, getting frustration when any of the social media sites goes down and majority expressed that excessive usage of social media is having overall negative impact which all might have resulted in their poor level of mental health.

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

S.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. It indicated that higher the social media addiction poor the mental health status of emerging adults. It is noticed that emerging adults who are using more of social media sites such as YouTube, Face book, Instagram also spending more time on these sites are highly addicted to it which ultimately resulted in poor mental health status. Similarly Kelly et al., (2018) who reported that there is link between social media use and mental health. 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 more of mental health difficulties. According to Guo et al., (2020) & Coyne et al., (2019) 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 & Priya (2020) 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.

CONCLUSION

Social media usage is a new addiction for majority of emerging adults in today's generation where, majority were using more number of social media apps for significant amount of time. They were using 3-5 GB of data per day on social media sites and were posting pictures and videos daily on these sites. Majority expressed that they were using social media without the knowledge of parents by spending more time on these sites than desired by ignoring responsibilities. Majority also expressed that using excessive social media has both positive and negative effect and it influences academic performance in negative way. Results found that many of the emerging adults had high level of social media addiction and poor level of mental health and it showed a negative relationship between social media addiction and mental health status of emerging adults. So, there is a need to improve mental health of emerging adults.

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