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Predictor variables of social media addiction among emerging adults

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Abstract

This study investigates predictor variables of social media addiction among emerging adults. Study was conducted in the Dharwad district of Karnataka State, India. The research, conducted during 2020-21 and 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. Social media addiction tool by Tutgun and Deniz (2015) was used to assess social media addiction levels. Results indicate that a nearly half of the students had high level of social media addiction. It was shown that stream, number of apps used and time spent on social media were significant predictors of social media addiction among emerging adults.

Keywords: Social media addiction, emerging adults, predictor variables, addiction levels, time spent on social media

Introduction

Emerging adulthood is a developmental stage that spans the late teens to the twenties, with a concentration on ages 18 to 29 years. It has pushed the start of young adulthood forwards. 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. Arnett (2000) ^[1] 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.

The term 'Social Media' comprises of two words. The word 'Social' implies interaction or communication among persons or groups while the word 'Media' refers to medium used for information or communication. Social media includes applications that enable the users to create and share profile and content to other users in social networking. It is a communication outlet that has drastic rise in the recent times. Social media a new form for communicating everything from major life events to minute particulars and it is capable of making substantial impact on how and what people communicate (Dollahide, 2021) ^[3]. Though social media is helping in no. of ways for the student community there are also negative effects if used excessively. This study article investigates the predictor variables of social

media addiction among emerging adults.

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. Regression was used for statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents social media addiction of emerging adults. It was observed that nearly half of the respondents fell under high category of social media addiction (49.30%), followed by medium category of social media addiction (30.00%) and low category of social media addiction (20.60%). Results were in line with Kant (2020) ^[4] 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) ^[5] 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.

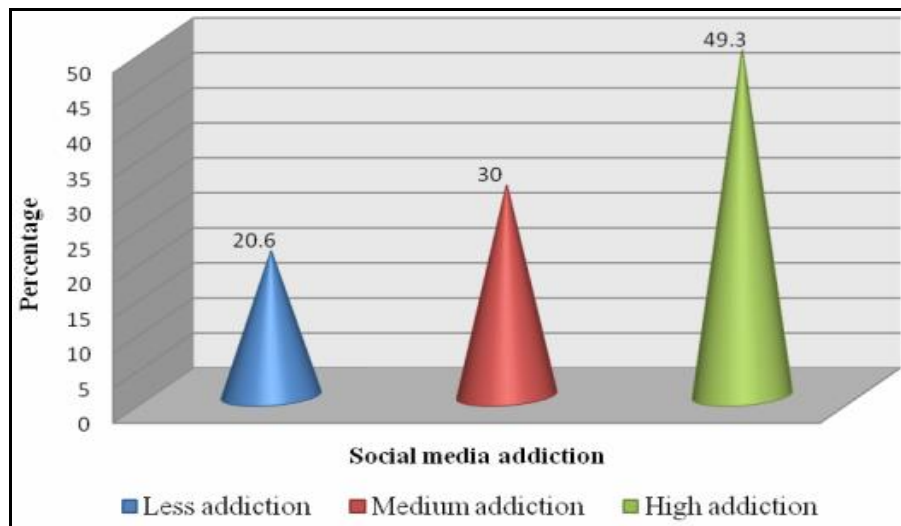


Fig 1: Overall distribution of respondents according to social media addiction

Table 1: Predictor variables of social media addiction

N=160

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Beta	t- value	Sig.	Beta	t- value	Sig.	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Individual factors									
Age	-0.096	1.298	0.196	-0.114	-1.624	0.107	-0.103	-1.433	0.154
Gender	0.060	0.810	0.419	-0.018	-0.256	0.799	-0.016	-0.219	0.827
Stream	-0.382	5.197	0.000	-0.424	-4.518	0.000	-0.427	-4.542	0.000
No. of apps	0.256	2.435	0.020	0.278	2.326	0.020	0.086	2.298	0.020
Time spent	0.298	3.436	0.011	0.305	3.421	0.011	0.324	3.362	0.011
Familial factors									
Education of father				0.039	-0.238	0.812	-0.019	-0.112	0.911
Education of mother				0.300	1.289	0.199	0.325	1.379	0.170
Occupation of father				0.206	-1.076	0.284	-0.229	-1.181	0.239
Occupation of mother				0.154	-1.415	0.159	-0.144	-1.309	0.192
Type family				0.206	-1.562	0.120	-0.190	-1.424	0.157
Socio economic status				0.062	-0.866	0.388	0.056	-0.782	0.436
Mental health status							0.053	-0.739	0.461
F- Value	6.943**			6.483**			5.970**		
R value	0.429			0.570			0.572		
R ² Value	0.184			0.268			0.328		

Table 1 highlights the variables that significantly predict social media addiction of emerging adults. They are individual factors (Model-1), individual & familial factors (Model-2) and individual factors, familial factors & mental health (Model-3). The hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to predict social media addiction of emerging adults.

In Model-1 individual factors such as age, gender, stream, number of apps used and time spent were taken which was found statistically significant ($F= 6.943$) where stream, number of apps and time spent were found to be the main predictors of social media addiction and combined effect of individual factors accounted for 18 percent of variance in social media addiction of emerging adults.

In Model-2 familial factors such as parents' education, parent's occupation, type of family and SES of family were included along with the individual factors which brought 26.8 percent of variance in social media addiction of emerging adults.

In Model-3 with addition of mental health to individual and familial factors it brought 32.8 percent of variance in social

media addiction of emerging adults. Coyle and Vaghn (2008) [2] also reported no of apps used by the students is significantly predicting the social media addiction where, majority of emerging adults are having 2-5 accounts in different social media sites and they visit these sites daily to keep in touch with friends, family members. Subramanyam *et al.* (2008) [7] reported time spent on social media is predicting addiction among emerging adults where, majority of emerging adults are spending 1-4 hours per day on social media sites for reading notes, reading comments, playing games, browsing friends profiles and for writing comments on friends profiles.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that among emerging adult's stream, no. of apps used and time spent on social media id significantly predicting social media addiction. Students with high usage had higher addiction. So there is a need to provide awareness/counselling for emerging adults on adverse effects of social media usage and encourage them to limit their time spent on social media use, limiting

the use of no. of apps and GB daily consumed. It is also necessary for parents/teachers to monitor emerging adult's usage of mobiles and help them in reducing social media addiction.

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