

## Extent of Facebook Addiction among College Students: Influence of Select Demographic Factors

Lancy D'Souza<sup>1\*</sup>, Samyukta A<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The current study is aimed at finding out the extent of Facebook addiction among graduate students in the Mysuru city. The sample consisted of 411(215 male and 196 female) students pursuing different courses aged between 17- 25 years, selected through simple random sampling. The students completed The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (2012), which measured addiction in six elements –salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse. Chi square test was employed to find out the levels of addiction by various demographic factors and 't' test was employed to find out the gender differences in the extent of Facebook addiction by male and female students on various elements. On the whole 9.7% of the sample studied was Facebook addicts, approximately 43% of the students selected in the present study had moderate to high Facebook addiction. Gender had significant influence over Facebook addiction; male students had higher addiction on Facebook than female students. Further analysis revealed that male students had higher addiction in only two of the elements of Facebook addiction-Tolerance and relapse than female students. Other factors- age, and course pursued did not have significant influence over sleep quality of the college students.

**Keywords:** Facebook Addiction, College Students

Facebook, one of the widely used social networking sites has been used world over and number of users increasing day by day. According to statistics provided by Facebook by itself (<https://zephoria.com/top-15-valuable-facebook-statistics/>), worldwide there are more than 2.13 billion individuals are very active users of Facebook, most common age being 25-34 years. In India, the Facebook users are more than 195 million. However, usage of Facebook has both advantages and disadvantages. "Facebook addiction refers to habitual patterns of behaviour associated with activities like gambling, shopping and Internet addiction" (Zeinab, Abu, Zobidah & Akhtar (2014)).The negative effects due to Facebook are lose of interest in

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor of Psychology, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore, Mysore, India

<sup>2</sup> Student, M.Sc Psychology, PG Dept. of Psychology, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore, India

\*Responding Author

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one's own surroundings, not bothered about others, decrease in the real world social interactions, reduced social and communication skills, and it may end up in obesity, along with other negative psychological effects. Mahadevaswamy and D'Souza (2017a) in a recent study reported that internet addiction adversely affects psychological wellbeing of adolescents, reduced sleep quality (D'Souza, Samyukta & Tejaswini, 2018), increased social maladjustment (Chandrashekara & D'Souza, 2013). However, internet addiction did not affect subjective wellbeing of the adolescents (Mahadevaswamy & D'Souza, 2017b).

Studies on the prevalence of Facebook addiction in different countries revealed varied figures. The prevalence varied from 4% to 43.2%, from countries like Turkey (Cam & Isbulan, 2012), Philippines (Marcial, 2014), Malaysia (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013), Peru (Wolniczak et al, 2013) and Norway (Giannakose, Chorianopoulos, Giotopoulos, Vlamos, 2013). In Iraq, among medical students of Babylon University the Facebook addiction was found to be 13%, (Alhumairi, Ffm, Ma, Fadhil, & Alhusuny, 2016). In Thailand, the prevalence of Facebook addiction among adolescents was found to be on the higher extent to 41.8% (Khumsri, Yingyeum, Manwong, Hanprathet, & Phanasathit, 2015).

Studies done earlier have clearly come out with the conclusion that individuals tend to addict to internet in general. After the introduction of several social networking sites, the addictions could be specific to social networking sites like Facebook, whatsapp, twitter, LinkedIn, etc. In India, a study on health university students revealed that burden of addiction was 7.25% and high risk was 24.75% in the study subjects (Masti, Cadabam & Sonakshi, 2015). Further, Goel, Subramanyam, Kamath (2013) studied on Mumbai population and found that 74.5% of the sample studied were average users and 0.7% were addicts. A review on Facebook addiction did not yield fruitful results indicating a need for study of Facebook addiction among college students. Since student community uses more Facebook and Instagram now a days for varied reasons, the present study aimed to find out extent of Facebook addiction in south Indian students studying in Mysuru city. It is hypothesized that Facebook addiction will be high among college students due to easy access and cheaper or free of cost.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sample*

Students pursuing undergraduate courses and ages between 17 & 25 were selected for the study. A total of 411 students (196 female and 215 male) pursuing arts, science and commerce were selected randomly from the few colleges in Mysuru.

### *Tools employed*

**The Bergen Facebook addiction scale (BFAS) 2012:** The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, Geir & Pallesen, 2012) was used to assess level of Facebook addiction among the selected sample. This scale consists of 18 self reporting items. Each item is scored using a 5 point Likert's scale, a graded response can be selected (1= rarely or none of the time to 5= all of the time). The minimum score is 18 while the maximum score is 100, higher the score higher the level of addiction. A total score of 18-36

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indicates low addiction, 37-54 indicates medium level of addiction and scores from 54-90 indicates high levels of addiction. The items measure six elements of addiction (salience, mood modification, tolerance withdrawal, conflict and relapse). The reliability for this questionnaire is 0.82 in Coefficient alpha.

### Procedure

The authors along with student volunteers personally visited few colleges in Mysuru and administered The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale to 411 students. The students were assured the confidentiality and were asked to answer all the questions honestly. The respondents were given proper instructions and explained the questions in case of doubts. Once the data were collected, they were scored and fed to the computer. The data were analyzed using Chi square test and 't' test. Table 1 gives the results of the distribution of levels of addiction by various demographic factors and results of test statistics and table 2 shows the results of mean scores of male and female students on various elements of Facebook addiction.

## RESULTS

**Table 1** Distribution of the respondents on levels of Facebook addiction by various demographic factors and results of test statistics.

Variable			Levels of Facebook addiction			Test statistics	P value
			Low	Moderate	High		
Overall		Frequency	233	138	40	X <sup>2</sup> = 135.956	P=.001
		Percent	56.7%	33.6%	9.7%		
Gender	Male	Frequency	106	89	20	X <sup>2</sup> = 12.64	P=.002
		Percent	49.3%	41.4%	9.3%		
	Female	Frequency	127	49	20		
		Percent	64.8%	25.0%	10.2%		
Age groups (in years)	<18	Frequency	95	48	13	X <sup>2</sup> = 2.803	P=.720
		Percent	60.9%	30.8%	8.3%		
	19-20	Frequency	116	74	23		
		Percent	54.5%	34.7%	10.8%		
	20+	Frequency	22	16	4		
		Percent	52.4%	38.1%	9.5%		
Course	Arts	Frequency	71	45	12	X <sup>2</sup> = 3.704	P=.448
		Percent	55.5%	35.2%	9.4%		
	Commerce	Frequency	64	48	12		
		Percent	51.6%	38.7%	9.7%		
	Science/technical	Frequency	98	45	16		
		Percent	61.6%	28.3%	10.1%		

**Overall Facebook addiction:** On the whole we find that a majority of 56.7% of the college students expressed low Facebook addiction, followed by 33.6% of them had moderate levels of addiction and remaining 9.7% of them high Facebook addiction Chi-square test revealed a significant difference between frequencies of low, moderate and high Facebook addiction (X<sup>2</sup> = 135.956; p=.001), confirming that majority of the sample responded had low Facebook addiction.

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**Gender and Facebook addiction:** A significant association was observed between gender and Facebook addiction ( $X^2= 12.64$ ;  $p=.002$ ), revealing that male students had higher levels of Facebook addiction compared to female students.

**Age and Facebook addiction:** When the Facebook addiction levels were verified against age, a non-significant association was observed between age groups and Facebook addiction ( $X^2= 2.803$ ;  $p=.720$ ), revealing that pattern of Facebook addiction was same among students belong to age groups of <19, 19-20 and above 20 years. In other words age of the students did not have significant influence over their Facebook addiction.

**Course and Facebook addiction:** A non-significant association was observed between course pursued and Facebook addiction ( $X^2= 3.704$ ;  $p=.646$ ), revealing that pattern of Facebook addiction was same among students pursuing different courses, which included Arts, Commerce and science.

*Table 2 Mean scores of male and female students on various elements of Facebook addiction and results of Independent samples 't' test*

Elements of Facebook addiction	Gender	Mean	S.D	't' value	P value
Salience	Male	5.66	2.48	1.814	.070
	Female	5.23	2.32		
Tolerance	Male	6.00	2.64	2.912	.004
	Female	5.28	2.35		
Mood Medication	Male	6.45	3.05	1.032	.303
	Female	6.14	3.11		
Relapse	Male	6.60	3.03	2.609	.009
	Female	5.88	2.53		
Withdrawal	Male	5.90	2.69	.638	.524
	Female	5.73	2.80		
Conflict	Male	6.37	3.44	.971	.332
	Female	6.06	3.13		
Total	Male	36.94	12.77	2.216	.034
	Female	34.31	12.28		

From the above table it is clear that male and female students differed significantly only in 2 of the elements of Facebook addiction. In Tolerance ( $t=2.912$ ;  $p=.004$ ) and in relapse ( $t=2.609$ ;  $p=.009$ ) male students had higher addiction compared to female students. However, in rest of the elements-Salience, Mood, Medication, and Withdrawal and in conflict male and female students did not differ in their mean scores.

## DISCUSSION

### *Major findings of the study*

1. It was found that 9.7% of the sample studied was Facebook addicts.

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2. On the whole approximately 43% of the students selected in the present study had moderate to high Facebook addiction.
3. Gender had significant influence over Facebook addiction, male students had higher addiction in Facebook than female students
4. Male students had higher addiction in only two of the elements of Facebook addiction- Tolerance and relapse than female students.
5. Other factors- age, and course pursued did not have significant influence over sleep quality of the college students.

It was observed from the study that 9.7% of the sample studied had Facebook addiction. Majority of the sample studied had low level of addiction. The studies conducted earlier also indicated similar figures; however, on an average it is lesser in India. Further, male subjects had higher addiction compared to female subjects. This finding is contrary to the study done by Masti, Cadabam and Sonakshi, (2015), where they found Facebook addiction was high among female students.

One of the reasons for Facebook addiction could be various features in Facebook like Candy Crush Saga, and other attractive games and features. Groves, Skues, and Wise (2014) examined the features of online games in order to determine how they encouraged problematic Internet use. The authors analyzed 10 popular games on Facebook, including tile matching games and simulation and role-playing games. One feature of tile matching games that encourages excessive use is the achievement-related status updates, such as posting high scores. This reinforces the idea of competition and serves as a reminder to continue playing the game. In addition, notifications by friends requesting additional lives or extra moves can prompt users to return to the game to help their friends (Groves, Skues, & Wise, 2014).

Facebook addicts show varied features/symptoms like persons with any other type of behavioural addictions, like salience, mood swings, and conflict in their day to day interactions. Like any other type of addiction, Facebook addiction affects negatively daily routine and interpersonal relationships. Studies have revealed that Facebook addicts may get a suicidal ideation too. Since Facebook addiction is a part of internet addiction,(Sheth, 2017) psychologists, psychiatrists, educationists, and policy makers should plan suitable strategies to reduce to Facebook addiction for better living at psycho-bio-social level. In NIMHANS, Bengaluru, a clinical facility is available for Healthy Use of internet since April 2014 to manage the menaces caused by various types of digital addictions and assist teenagers addicted to the internet and mobile texting (SHUT, 2014).

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***Conflict of Interest***

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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