

## Home Environment and Social Media Usage in Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

A home is a place of residence and comfort. It is defined as a place where an individual or a family can rest and be able to store personal property. Home environment refers to those aspects of people's domestic lives that contribute to their living conditions. These factors may be physical, psychological, social circumstances or due to wider cultural patterns such as location. The aim of the present study is to explore the relationship between home environment on social media usage in adolescents. The snowball sampling method is used to collect the data for the study. The present study consisted sample size of 30 aged between 14-18 years. It is hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between psychological home environment and social media usage. The data was collected using Home Environment Inventory by Dr. Karuna Shankar. No specific scale is available to assess the social media usage of an individual. A Social Media Usage Checklist was developed to assess the duration for which an individual is active on various social media platforms. The intensity of usage was then classified as being mild, moderate or high. Data was analysed on SPSS and correlations between all the domains of home environment and social media usage was found by performing Pearson's bivariate correlation. A strong correlation of 0.38 was obtained between social media usage and rejection at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation between social media usage and social isolation and protectiveness were found to be 0.54 in both cases significant at the 0.01 level.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, Home Environment, Social Media Usage*

In the early 2000's, the Web became much more personal as social networking websites were introduced and were accepted and embraced by the masses. Urban India had 42 million active internet users in 2008, compared to 5 million in 2000. The growing imbalance created by the excessive usage of social media nowadays is of a great concern for parents, researchers and society especially regarding the mental health of individuals. One of the most common activities, now becoming a hobby for present generation is the use of social media sites, which includes applications like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, online gaming, virtual worlds like Sims, YouTube, and Blogs and so on. According to Merriam Webster (2014), social media are "forms of electronic communication (such as social networking sites

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and microblogging) that allow users to create online communities where they can share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).”

Essentially, the home environment is everything involved in someone's domestic life that contributes to their living conditions. These factors may be physical, psychological conditions, social circumstances. A child's home environment can shape his/her learning, development and behaviour. Children develop and acquire new knowledge by reacting to their surroundings, to the order and structure of the home environment. Research shows that a learning environment in the home is highly predictive of child outcomes (Bradley et al, 2001; Chazen-Cohen et al., 2009).

Like any other habit, media consumption habits are formed during the early ages of childhood and adolescence, usually within the context of home. The kinds of media and content children are exposed to in the early stages of life are greatly influenced by their parents. Media devices are provided to children by parents, who set rules for their use at home, and they provide examples of how a person should use and understand media content by communicating their thoughts and beliefs (Na, Kim and Park, 2009; Kim, 2011; Park, Yoon and Yang, 2004; Song et al, 2009). Much of the digital media consumption takes place in individual spaces and outside of the home boundaries, but parents continue to exercise influence on the amount and ways children use the media. Because there has been minimal intervention in children's digital media use, the impact has been subtle (Tapscott, 2008).

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Extended use of social media has led to increased internet addiction, cyber bullying, sex chatting, sleep deprivation, and the decline of face-to-face interaction (Keefe & Pearson, 2011).

Panticet al., (2012) conducted research on 160 high school students through personal interviews and Beck depression inventory, it was found that depression and time spent on Facebook by adolescents is positively correlated.

Research studies have shown that dependence on social media negatively impact our relationships with people around. Researchers, Ray and Jat (2010), found that mass media have harmful effects on children's health and behavior, since they "have not yet developed the ability to distinguish fantasy and reality, particularly if it is presented as "reality". This can lead the children to have distorted views about the world and their relationships with other individuals. It can also lead the children in turn to spend less time with their parents, or doing outside activities, which can lead to isolation and aggression over time. As it is correct that the home environment influences social media usage, the reverse is also true. In a research conducted by Schneider, King, & Delfabbro (2017) to understand the family factors in adolescents' problematic internet gaming. It was found that poorer quality family relationships are associated with increased severity of internet gaming problems. It was also found that the paternal relationships may be protective against such dependence.

Since parents have a huge amount of influence on their children in forming values, habits, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs, parent-child interaction also plays an important role in forming young people's habits and attitudes towards media use. Research studies by Padilla & Walker (2006), Valkenburg, Krccmar, Peeters and Marseille (1999) tried to understand the impact of parental interventions as well as family communication style (Krcmar, 1996; Messaris and Kerr, 1983) and how it affect the way children use the media and the social

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networking styles. Researchers in the field of child psychology have determined that the involvement of parents in the lives of their children and the type of intervention have an effect on the social and emotional well-being of children and adolescents (Arim, Marshall, and Shapka, 2010; Barber, Stolz, and Olsen, 2005; Smetana, and Daddis, 2002).

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Aim:***

To study the relationship between the different domains of home environment and social media usage in Adolescents

#### ***Objectives:***

To Study and explore the existence of a correlation between Home Environment and Social Media Usage.

#### ***Hypotheses***

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant relationship between different domains of home environment and social media usage.

#### ***Variables***

- Independent variable: Home Environment
- Dependent variable: Social Media Usage

#### ***Research design***

Quasi Experimental Ex-Post Facto Design

#### ***Inclusion Criteria***

- Literate population
- Adolescents (14 years to 18 years)
- Individuals residing in Urban Bengaluru

#### ***Exclusion Criteria***

- People who do not know to read and write English
- People with physical disability

#### ***Tools***

- **Social media checklist**

To collect the data, a social media checklist was formed, wherein basic questions regarding the social media usage was asked- the duration of time spent online, number of platforms (or social networking websites) participants are active on, preference for anonymity, frequency of posting online, number of participants (or individual) chat every day online. Responses were graded on a four-point scale wherein the option depicting the usage of social media was scored 4 and the option depicting least usage was scored 1. The option depicting second-to-least usage was allotted 2 points and the option depicting second to most usage was allotted 3 points. The checklist was found to have content validity as graded by a subject expert.

- **Home environment inventory**

Home Environment Inventory is be used to measure children's perception of parental child rearing behaviour i.e., home environment, this inventory was given by Dr. Karuna Shankar. It consists of 100 questions focussing on 10 different dimensions of home environment.

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The split-half reliabilities for various dimensions of home environment are as follows: control- 0.879, protectiveness- 0.748, punishment- 0.947, conformity- 0.866, social isolation- 0.870, reward- 0.875, deprivations of privileges- 0.855, nurturance- 0.901 rejection- 0.841 and 0.726 for permissiveness.

Home Environment Inventory has been found to possess content validity as measured with the help of views expressed by judge's criterion related validity could not be established because of the lack of appropriate external criteria.

### Procedure

After deciding the topic Home Environment Inventory by Dr. Karuna Shankar was chosen to obtain data about the different domains of an individual's psychological home environment. To obtain data regarding Social Media usage of an individual, a checklist was constructed. Considering this is a pilot study, the sample size was determined to be 30 and data was collected through Google forms from individuals aged between 14 years to 18 years. The data was analysed using SPSS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Table 1 Correlation between social media usage and with different domains of home environment, namely- rejection, social isolation, anonymity, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, deprivation, reward, nurturance and permissiveness.*

	Social Media Usage
Rejection	0.38*
Social Isolation	0.54**
Anonymity	0.13 <sup>NS</sup>
Protectiveness	0.54**
Punishment	0.24 <sup>NS</sup>
Conformity	-0.14 <sup>NS</sup>
Deprivation	0.35 <sup>NS</sup>
Reward	-0.27 <sup>NS</sup>
Nurturance	-0.32 <sup>NS</sup>
Permissiveness	-0.15 <sup>NS</sup>

*NS – Not significant, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01*

Table 1. shows the correlation between social media and different domains of home environment. The correlation between social media usage and rejection is 0.38, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. The correlation between social media usage with protectiveness and social isolation is 0.549 and 0.549 respectively at the 0.01 level of significance. Correlation of social media usage with anonymity, punishment, conformity, deprivation, reward, nurturance and permissiveness is 0.134, 0.245, -0.148, 0.358, -0.277, -0.325 and -0.150, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between home environment and social media dependence. The data was collected from 30 individuals aged between 14-18 years of age, all of them residing in urban areas. The data was collected using Home Environment inventory given by Dr. Karuna Shankar, focusing on ten different domains of home environment namely- rejection, social isolation, anonymity, protectiveness, punishment, conformity, deprivation, reward, nurturance, permissiveness. To understand the social media

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usage of the participants, a checklist was made to trace the participants' online activities and time spent online.

In a research conducted by Park (2011), it can be seen that various home environment factors like parents' attachment and interaction with the children, involvement in their life, monitoring and engagement in the child's life can have a great influence on the social media usage and dependence in children. The overall home environment determines how child perceives internet and social media and how they make use of it.

Table 1 shows the correlation between different domains of home environment and the social media usage. As it can be observed in the table, there are three major aspects of home environment that shows strong correlation with social media usage- rejection, isolation and protectiveness.

The correlation between social media usage and rejection is 0.388. There is a significant correlation between both the variables at 0.01 level of significance. In a study conducted by Demircioğlu, Zeynep & GöncüKöse, Asli (2018) to understand the effects of attachment styles, dark triad, rejection sensitivity, and relationship satisfaction on social media addiction among 229 university students, it was found that relationship (dis) satisfaction was a significant predictor of social media addiction; and also, it partially mediated the link of fearful attachment with social media addiction. Additionally, the direct positive paths from fearful attachment, rejection sensitivity and psychopathy to social media addiction were found to be significant. The findings were discussed regarding the theoretical and practical implications along with suggestions for future research. Studies have focussed on social rejection and drugs, alcohol (Laws & Ansell, 2017) and other substance dependency, but the social media dependence is no different. The rejection individuals face in their real lives, they try to compensate for it with seeking validation online.

Another domain that shows a strong positive correlation with social media usage is social isolation. There a significant correlation of 0.549 at 0.05 level of significance. When individuals seem to face social isolation and rejection, they tend to seek excessive reassurances (Starr & Davilla, 2008). Social media tends to provide people with the space to seek such assurances. Various studies have shown that lonely people tend to prefer socializing on internet, which leads to overuse of social networking sites (Caplan, 2007; Durak-Batigün, & Hasta, 2010; Esen & Siyez, 2011; Morahan-Martina & Schumacherb, 2003).

Protectiveness and social media usage also show a strong correlation (see Table.1) of 0.549 at 0.05 level of significance. Research studies have shown over time that individuals with social anxiety often come from a family of over-protective parents (Weiner, 2003). Various evidences show that loneliness, social anxiety and social isolation can cause excessive use of social networking sites in young people. In a study conducted by Ndasauka, Hou, Wang, & Yang L et al. (2016) on excessive use of Twitter among college students in the UK, it was found that real life social interaction was negatively associated with excessive use of Twitter, and loneliness was a significant factor that mediated this relationship. Hence, it can be said that many people use social networking sites in general to relieve themselves of their loneliness.

Social anxiety and the need for social assurance are also associated with problematic use of social media to the point where it can become an addiction or dependency and has even been

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shown to activate the same areas in the brain as addictive drugs such as cocaine (Turel, He, Xue & Bechara, 2014). So, the vicious cycle is that loneliness and social anxiety generate the use of social networking sites often leading to the point of addiction and dependency, but then the addiction to these sites itself causes further forms of anxiety and stress (Star, 2008).

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between Home Environment and Social Media Usage in Adolescents. The following are the conclusions drawn from this study:

- Social isolation, Rejection and Protectiveness are found to be strongly correlated with increased social media usage.

### Implications

The results from this study could be used to further explore the impact home environment could have on social media usage on adolescents and a comparative study could be conducted to understand the same in adults and children. The results of this study, upon further exploration can be used to develop interventions to help individuals who suffer from maladaptive usage of social media due to their home environments. Furthermore, this study contributes to enriching the present body of literature.

### Limitations

- Generalizability of data could be difficult considering the sample size is small.
- Due to paucity of time, the rural population could not be included in the study.

### Scope for further study

It can be further researched on other age groups. It could be studied on bigger sample size to improve generalization. It can be used to explore other variables further. Qualitative approach could be used to understand the reason for the findings of this study.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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