

The Study on the Affinity of Social Networking and Social Connectedness

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ABSTRACT

Social networking services allow us to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. This may be particularly relevant for young people. Youths' increased usage of data platforms has impacted their choices in a number of ways, including their yearning for a sense of connection. This study is quantitative research. Using a standardized questionnaire, 102 participants were taken from college students. Taking social networking as the independent variable and social connectedness as the dependent variable. Statistical analysis was performed by Spearman. Rho Correlations were implemented using SPSS version 25. According to the findings, social networking and social connectedness have a significant negative impact; Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was $-.069$. The findings indicate that Cohen's cut-off points indicate there is no significant correlation between two variables. The p-value is above 0.05, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the two variables. We may conclude that there is no significant correlation between social networking and social connectedness. These findings suggest the expansion of literature on social networking and social connectedness among college students in India.

Keywords: *Social Networking, Social Connectedness, Youths, College Students*

Many people utilize social networking sites to stay in touch with familiar acquaintances and meet new ones. This may be especially important for youths. Friendships offer children emotional support and aid in the development of their identities.

The younger generations, who are heavy consumers of innovation in electronics, are dubbed high technology and electronic competencies play an important part in their welfare as a whole. As a result, organizations and enterprises are focused on the progress of these skills. (Picatoste et al. 2018).

Young people's lives are greatly influenced by social networking sites, and having strong digital abilities is essential to bolstering their important trajectories, which in turn has a significant impact on the various aspects of well-being (Ryff, 2018). Social network platforms have made it feasible for people and organizations to communicate in ways that

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were previously unthinkable, increasing connectedness between them gradually but dramatically. Social media sites are becoming a well-recognised societal phenomenon. Substantially popular personal social platform sites, in the year 2016, Facebook announced that it had achieved the milestone of two billion monthly active users. With over half of the population of the globe using it, Facebook has become the most popular social networking platform. (Castillo de Mesa et al., 2020)

Key concepts, Theories and Study

Social networking: Social networking sites are websites that allow users to build public or semi-public profiles, engage with other individuals, and explore their own and others' relationships within a defined framework. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. (Boyd & Ellison, 2010)

Social connectedness: According to Lee and Robbins in 1995, they defined social connection as the sense of being associated with an extended community or network. (Zhao et al., 2022)

Belongingness Theory (Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary): The desire to belong can, in theory, be directed towards any other individual, and the dissolution of one tie ought to be partially compensated for with another. It takes time to develop new connections, as well as to accumulate closeness and common knowledge. Socializing with an ongoing intimate could thus bring fulfillment, such as a sense of identity, that is unlikely to occur in contacts with strangers or unfamiliar individuals. The belongingness hypothesis can be separated from the hypothesized need for basic social contact by determining whether interactions with strangers or persons one dislikes or despises would satisfy the requirement. It can be separated from a hypothetical desire for positive, pleasant social contact by investigating if non hostile relationships with strangers would satisfy that need.

The necessity of belonging implies a desire for relationships, so encounters with individuals seem appealing as potential initial actions towards over time connections (for example, engaging in social abilities or developing one's capacity for attracting partners), whereas relationships with opposed people are not. (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)

Research Questions

The study is used for understanding about the social networking among the youths and their connectedness in the social settings.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social connectedness is important in teenagers' daily lives and is associated with favorable growth in oneself, habits, and general wellness (Barber and Schluterman 2008; Stoddard et al. 2011; Uchino et al. 1996). Scholars discovered that increased interaction with others among young adults it does not only protects against a variety of unsafe actions, rather it promotes better psychological well-being resulting lowering anxiousness, feeling low mood, and feeling of abandonment (Beam et al. 2002; DuBois and Silverthorn 2005; Hawkins et al. 1999; Zimmerman et al. 2002). Furthermore, young connectivity to many social realms (i.e., family, school, friends, and community) predicts not just healthy development, way of living, and overall health behaviors, providing a sense of psychological wellness in midlife. (Olsson et al. 2013).

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Youths' increased use of information servers has influenced their behavior in a variety of ways, including their desire for a sense of connection. The natural setting for young people today has shifted beyond an emphasis on physical surroundings and towards an online setting in which youth invest a substantial amount of time in virtual playgrounds. (Wu et al., 2015)

Rising usage on online networks highlights the need for research on the motivations behind their use (Sheldon, 2008) the different advantages and capabilities provided in the social networking sites. Having additional modes of interaction, such as an announcement with a friend on the so-called "wall" or exchanging photographs, provides greater mobility in various interaction styles. Bonds and Bonds-Raacke (2008) emphasize the need of determining how flexibility may meet social and personal demands. More study is needed to bridge gaps in our understanding of the uses and appeasement people derive from social media (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). (Hart, n.d.)

Many youths' everyday lives revolve around social media, in the year 2022 poll consisting of participant ages from 13 to 17 years provides an insight. Over 1,300 replies, poll discovered around 35% of youths using not less than one of the five social media sites more than several times every day. There are five social media platforms which are mainly Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat TikTok and YouTube. (Teens and Social Media Use: What's the Impact?, 2024)

According to Van Bel, Smoulders, Ijssel Steijn, and de Kurt (2011), social connection as that immediate sensation of connection and connectivity, determined by both quantitative and qualitative research on the community-based judgements and connection distinction"(p.2). Building the perception of social connectivity is a remarkably important part of human existence, it improves many facets of well-being psychologically (McCoy, 1999; Mauss et al., 2011). Those who are innately motivated to find and preserve the social links with other individuals, participating in such practises like joining groups, speaking with strangers, and contacting existing friends (Baumeister & Leary, Baumeister and Leary1995).

Technology may be considered a driver of well-being since it influences the experiences of young people all over the globe (Collin and Burns, 2009). Some variety of research has highlighted the importance of digital knowledge as a well-being operator in young adults. ICTs improve wellness by supporting non-professional training, developing internet persona, enhancing job competencies, and fostering meta-social abilities, among other things. (Castillo de Mesa et al., 2020)

With the sudden rise of usage of internet platforms, the extent of involvement in virtual interaction has increased. Resulting to more probable with greater reason that almost all of a person's off the network connections were able to reach online. At present the tendency has undoubtedly altered the structure of interacting virtually and could have ramifications regarding a certain way required for interaction with others was developed, conserved, or denied. Examiners thereby started to particularly consider certain links on the usage of social media and social connectedness (Ahn & Shin, Reference Ahn and Shin 2013 and Hinsch 2011). (Ryan et al., 2017)

The application of online platforms to communicate with others, either via in-person conversation, the publishing process, or consuming data and comments, makes it a

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fundamentally social part of youth. As a result, social media use may have a substantial impact on improving connections between individuals and groups. However, parents have voiced concern that the use of screens will interfere with other things that could benefit connectivity, including classes, recreational pursuits, and interpersonal interactions. Social media consumption among youth may improve and hinder social connectedness at the same time due to these contradictory activation and displacement mechanisms. (Winstone et al., 2021)

Gao et al. (2020) found a high frequency of mental health disorders, including anxiousness and low mood, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic among the population. Hunt et al. (2018) discovered that limiting social media use resulted in significantly decreased degrees of loneliness, sadness, and fear of missing out. (Saggar, 2021)

According to a longitudinal study by Jose, Ryan, and Pryor (2012), global connection predicts well-being but not the other way around. It measures four domains: community connectivity, family, school and peer. According to Jose et al. (2012), adolescent well-being and psychological adjustment are significantly influenced by global connectedness. This study revealed that connectivity and well-being remained consistent throughout adolescence. The study by Grieve et al. (2013) aimed to distinguish between online and offline connectivity and compare the benefits of each. The results showed that connectivity derived Facebook use differed from offline social connectivity. These findings indicate that social closeness may differ between online and offline peers. Disconnectedness remained constant both online and offline. According to Grieve et al. (2013), Facebook social connectivity is associated with somewhat beneficial psychological outcomes, including reduced depression, anxiety, and increased subjective well-being. (Klinkhoff, 2017)

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The aim of the research study is to find the correlation between social networking and social connectedness.

Objectives

To understand the relationship between social networking and social connectedness.

Research Design

The focus of the study is to help us to understand social networking and social connectedness and the relation shared by the two. It is a quantitative correlation study.

Sampling Method

The research study has adopted convenience sampling method.

Sample Size

The number of participants targeted is 102 students in Shillong, Meghalaya

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants should be enrolled as a student in any recognised university.
- Participants should be residing in Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Participants should successfully complete the questionnaire given to them.

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Exclusion criteria

- Participants under psychiatric medication.
- Participants above the age of 25 years.

Tools

Social Networking Usage Questionnaire is a 19-item psychometric scale that is designed to measure the usage of various social networks available in today's world. The scale was originally developed by Savita Gupta and Liyaqat Bashir in 2018.

Social Connectedness Scale is an 8-item psychometric scale that is designed to evaluate the extent youth feels associated with others in their social environment. The scale was originally developed by Lee, R. M., & Robbins, S. B., in 1995.

The demographic details, includes name /initials of subject, age, gender, educational level, occupation, marital status, place, religion, nationality, any psychological issues/problems, and any treatment for the psychological issue, were collected separately.

Statistical Analysis

The scores obtained from both psychometric measures were calculated according to the tools' norms and analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 21.

Spearman The data was analyzed using correlation to analyze the association between social networking and social connectivity.

Ethical Consideration

While collecting data, participants provided informed consent, indicating that they were aware of the research's goals and motives and willingly decided to participate. The participant's confidentiality of the personal data and information was respected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the research study is to find the correlation between social networking and social connectedness among college students in Shillong, Meghalaya. The study used quantitative research methods, including a social networking usage questionnaire and a social connectedness measure. It has a sample size of 102 students currently enrolled in recognized colleges. Before collecting data, participants provided their demographic information and signed consent forms.

Results

Table 1 Gender, current education level and geographical area

	Male	Female	Total
Current education level	48	54	102
Undergraduate	35	39	74
Post graduate	13	15	28
Higher Studies	-	-	-
Geographical Area			
Urban	25	32	57
Rural	23	22	45

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Table 2 Showing the age statistics of the participants

Central Tendency	Age
Mean	20.6
Median	21
Mode	20

In table 2, outlines the age demographics of the study, the mean age is 21.47 in which the specified range from 18-25 years of the participants. This compliance to the specific range criterion ensures a focused and relevant study group, refining the understanding of social networking and self-connectedness within the context of youth.

Table 3 Descriptive statistic of participants

Variables	N	Mean	Mode	Range	Quartile Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Networking	102	45.68	51	68	14	.625	.971
Social Connectedness	102	46.26	37	33	16	-.042	-1.170

From table 3, outlines that the total number of participants is 102. The mean of social networking is 45.68 and social connectedness is 46.26; mode of social networking is 51 and social connectedness is 37; range of social networking is 68 and social connectedness is 33; quartile range of social networking is 14 and social connectedness is 16; the skewness of social networking is .625 and social connectedness is -.042; the kurtosis of social networking is .971 and social connectedness is -1.170.

Table 4 Showing the test for normality for the data set social networking and social connectedness

Shapiro-Wilk			
Variable	Statistics	df	sig.
Social Networking	.969	102	.001
Social Connectedness	.951	102	.018

H₀ : Social networking and social connectedness scores are not normally distributed

Figure 1 Showing the histogram of the data set of social networking

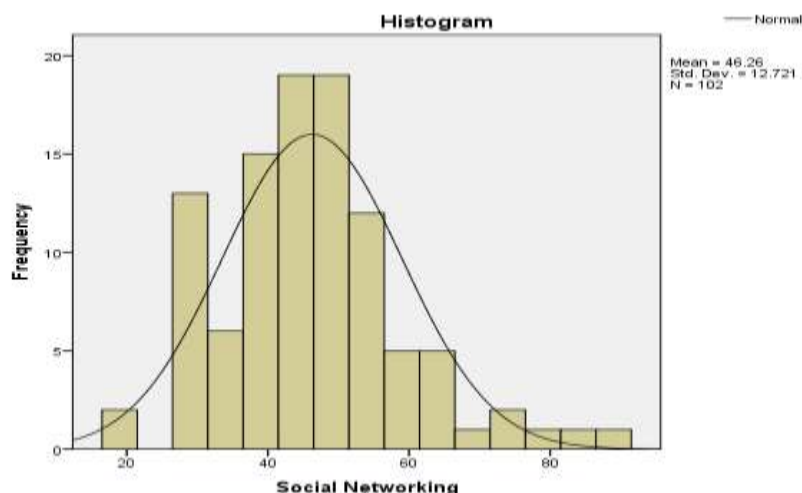


Figure 2 Showing the histogram of the data set of social connectedness

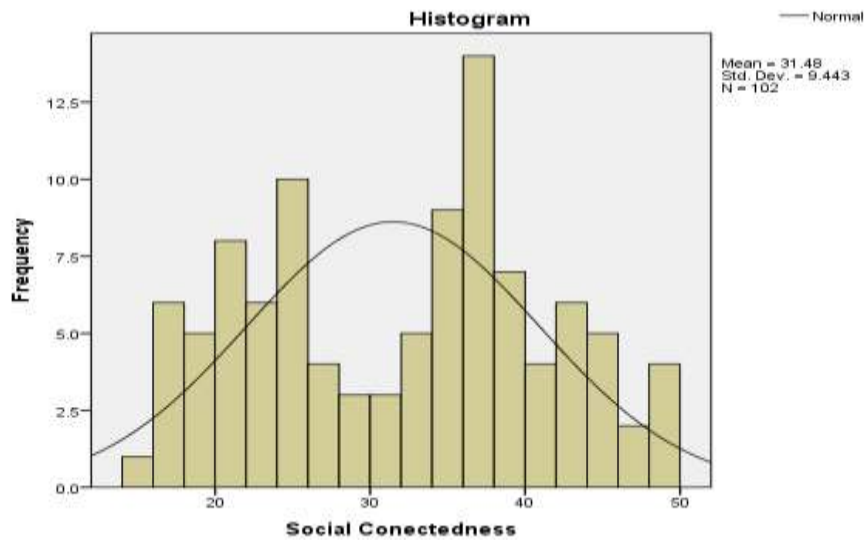
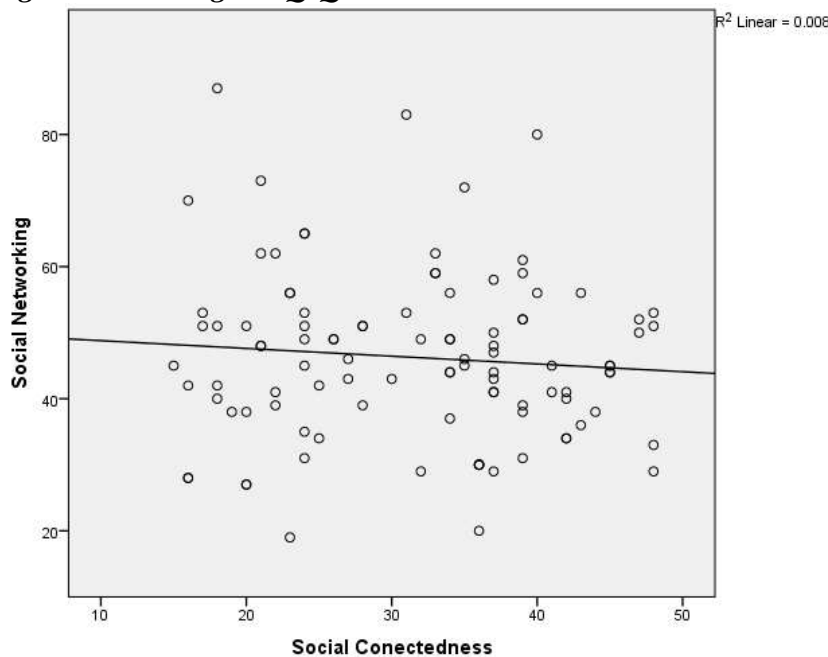


Figure 3 Showing the Q-Q Plots



From table 4, it outlines the normality of the data by applying the Shapiro Wilk test. The result is found to be the SN ($df = 102$) = .969 and SC ($df = 102$) = .951. The result confirms that from the sample given, the data are not normally distributed on social networking and social connectedness. Thus, the null hypothesis is retained.

Figure 1 and 2 are the graphical representation of social networking and social connectedness respectively which indicates that the data are not normally distributed.

In figure 3, it shows the graphical representation of social networking and social connectedness that data indicates a lack of linearity between social networking activity and social connectedness. Based on the data analysis or research findings, there is not a clear linear relationship between the amount of social networking and social connectedness.

Table 5 Showing the result of Spearman Rho relation between social networking and social connectedness

Variables	Social Networking	Social Connectedness	N	Sig.
Social Networking	1.00	-.069	102	.448
Social Connectedness	-.069	1.00	102	.448

Variables	Social Networking	Social Connectednes	N	sig.
Social Networking	1.00	-.069	102	.448
Social Connectednes	-.069	1.00	102	.448

H₀ : There is no relationship between social networking and social connectedness

In table 5, outlines Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was $-.069$, $p > 0.05$, with a sample size of 102. Cohen's cut-off points indicate there is no significant correlation between two variables. The p-value is above 0.05, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the two variables. We may conclude that there is no significant correlation between social networking and social connectedness. The p-value is not significant; thus, H₀ is retained. This suggests that individuals who engage in social networking may not always feel linked to the virtual world, but can also adjust to reality and feel safe with others.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study is to understand the relationship shared between social networking and social connectivity. This research aims to better understand social network platforms and its relationship with social connectivity. Using the results as a basis, it is clear that the null hypothesis is retained; in other words, there is no association between social networking and social connectivity. It is also vital to note that no alternate hypothesis has been developed due to the low amount of existing research.

Existing research has identified no substantial association between using the social network platforms and social connectivity. However, there was a substantial link between the reason for utilising social media and social connectivity. Furthermore, there was no difference in social media use or social connectivity between male and female. Finally, this study demonstrates that adopting social media for its intended purpose can improve social interactions. (Rathakrishnan et al., 2022)

According to the above results, there is no significant correlation between social networking and social connectedness, indicating that the two variables has no relationship among them.

There may be more aspects to consider in relation to this current research. These variables include the fact that while social networking may not affect an individual's connection with others, it might have an impact on the individual's psychological well-being. Because social networking allows most of us to express ourselves in the manner, we want others to see us, it can have an impact on our self-esteem, self-concept, and other factors.

SUMMARY

The research study is done to understand the interconnection between social networking and social connectedness. The important objective of the current study is to understand the correlation between social networking and social connectedness. A quantitative method was used to conduct the research study. Social Networking Usage Questionnaire and Social Connectedness Scale was used to collect the data from the participants. The study sample is 102 of college students in Shillong, Meghalaya. The statistical method used is the Spearman Correlation Test.

Limitation

- The study focused wholly only on social networking and social connectedness, there can be other variables that can be included to understand more about the study.
- The study focused only on the students excluding the other individual with the same age either working or drop out which is providing a generalised assumption for the whole population.
- The study did not look in depth about the time usage, the number of social networking platforms used by the participants.

Recommendation

Embracing other variables that can be beneficial towards the research study.

Gathering more information relating to the utilization of social networking platforms and the number of collective internet platforms used by the participant.

CONCLUSION

The result obtained shows that there is no significant correlation of the two variables that are social networking and social connectedness. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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