

Social Networking Addiction, Academic Stress and Mental Health: A Gender-Based Study among College Students

Monika Devi^{1*}

ABSTRACT

In today's time, the social network is affecting student's education and their mental health. The purpose of this study is to investigate the gender-based variations in social networking addiction, academic stress and mental health among college students. This study sample consists of 140 students (70 boys and 70 girls) in different colleges of Bhiwani (Haryana) with an age range of 17 to 20 years. The data for current study were collected by using standardized scales for social networking addiction scale, academic stress scale and mental health scale and analyzed using independent sample t-test. The result revealed no significant gender-based difference between social networking addiction and academic stress among girls and boys students. There is significant gender-based difference between mental health of girls and boys.

Keywords: *Social Networking Addiction, Academic Stress, Mental Health, Gender-based*

Globally, in recent years, rapid growth of the internet, social media platforms, and increase in number of users has transformed the communication between people. Social networking sites and mobile applications allow individuals to share information, thoughts, feelings, and opinions, personal, social, and educational experiences. Today students are active participants in social networking sites and the virtual environments. Social media offers numerous benefits such as facilitating communication, collaboration, access to different resources, excessive usage of social networks can lead to both positive and negative effects on a students mental health, social life, and academic performance. One of the most concerning effects is excessive use of social networking sites on students academic performance, including lower grades, reduce concentration, reduction in study time. Recent research suggests that internet addiction may be significantly influenced by human emotional elements, where feeling of sadness, anxiety, and stress trigger dopamine-driven compulsive behavior in college students (Kendell, 1998).

According to studies on internet addiction and depression suggests that excessive internet use disrupts an individual's daily functioning and is associated with a rise in the prevalence of depression (Kraut et al., 1998; Mc Kenna & Bargh, Nie, Hillygus, & Erbing, 2002). From human perspective excessive internet use reduces social networks, increases feelings of

¹Chaudhary Bansi Lal University, Bhiwani, Haryana

*Corresponding Author

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loneliness and stress, and can take away from time spent with loved ones and friends (Nie et al., 2002).

Internet addiction exerts a detrimental impact on an individual's quality of life. It disrupts multiple functioning, leading to significant challenges in professional and academic performance, relationship problems, social connections, and a range of personal and emotional difficulties. These may increase the risk of self-harm and harm to and from others, physical health issues such as sleep disturbances, eye strain, or sedentary lifestyle-related issues, mental health problems and reduced psychological well-being. These consequences can affect an individual's overall well-being (Cham et al., 2019).

Social Networking Addiction

Social networking sites and applications like Facebook, WhatsApp, X/Twitter, and Instagram have transformed the way individuals and organizations can communicate, connect, interact, share information, and build relationships. These platforms help users to interact in real time, share personal experiences, and professional knowledge of relevant fields, maintain contact with family and friends across distances...

According to Beard & Wolfe (2001) defined internet addiction as the "use of the Internet that creates psychological, social, school, and work difficulties in a person's life."

Types of Networking Addiction:

- **Cyber sexual Addiction:** Online pornography, adult websites, sexual fantasy/adult chat rooms, and other such things are all part of a cybersex addiction.
- **Cyber Relationship Addiction:** The Internet addiction condition includes the impulse control problem known as "cyber relationship addiction."
- **Net Compulsions:** Online gambling, shopping, and auctioning addictions can all lead to monetary and employment-related issues.
- **Computer gaming addiction:** Obsessive computer game playing poses a risk to the wellbeing of the individual by influencing their emotions and cognitive processes.

Mental Health

In the modern world, everyone is in danger due to rising population and worsening health conditions. One of the most crucial topics on which we should concentrate has always been health. The idea of health encompasses more than just a healthy body; it also refers to well-controlled emotions and a sharp, effective mind. This indicates that the mind and body function effectively and in unison (Kaur, 2006–2007).

"Mental Health" is made up of the phrases "Mental" and "Health." Generally speaking, "health" refers to stable circumstances, wellbeing, or the absence of disease. Therefore, mental health refers to a sound mental state, a state of psychological well-being, or the absence of mental illness (Singh, 2004).

According to Longman's, "Mental health is a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptom, and coping with ordinary demands and stresses of life."

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Academic Stress

It used to be believed that students would be least affected by stress or difficulty. In contrast, stress is increasingly understood to be a lifestyle issue that affects people at all phases of development (Masih & Gulrez, 2006; Banerjee & Chatterjee, 2016). In the past, it was believed that students' primary duty was to concentrate on their academics, and that homework alone did not cause stress. Instead, the demands made by parents turned into a major stressor, eventually creating loads that were too much for these young people to carry. High academic stress has been linked to a number of disorders, including depression, anxiety, behavioral troubles, impatience, and others (Dep, Strodl & Sun, 2015; Verma, Sharma & Larson, 2002). Due to its association with attention problems, failure anxiety, pessimistic future assessments, etc., depression has also been related to stressful adolescence (Busari, 2012).

Gupta and Khan, 1987, "Academic stresses a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even awareness of the possibility of such failure."

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tang, C. S. K., Koh, Y.W., & Gan. Y. (2017). This study looked at how common internet addiction, addiction to online gaming, and addiction to online social networking are among young adults in China, Singapore, and the US. It also looked at how these addictions relate to depressive symptoms. For the study, a total of 3267 undergraduate students were enrolled. A variety of psychological tools were employed to evaluate depressive symptoms and various Internet-related addictions. The results showed that while female students had greater rates of online social networking addiction, male students were more likely to be addicted to internet use and online gaming.

Azizi, S.M., Soroush, A., & Khatony, A. (2019). The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between social networking addiction and Iranian students' academic performance. 360 students were chosen for this cross-sectional study using stratified random sampling. A personal information form and the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale served as the research tools. Academic performance was also evaluated using the pupils' grades from the preceding academic quarter. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, SPSS 18.0 was used to examine the data that had been gathered. Male students scored much higher on the mean social networking addiction scale than female students did (52.65 11.50 vs. 49.35 13.96), with a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$).

Zhao, L. (2023). With an emphasis on social media addiction (SMA) and its potential effects on academic performance, this study attempts to investigate the harmful effects of social media use on college students. It also looks at the stress's possible mediating role in this link, which hasn't gotten enough attention in earlier studies. To investigate the SMA antecedent variables and the connection between SMA, stress, and academic performance, a study model was created. Partial Least Squares and a structural equation model were used to collect and evaluate data from 372 Chinese college students (mean age 21.3, 42.5% males). The results show that usage intensity is a strong predictor of SMA and that both SMA and stress have a detrimental effect on academic performance in college students.

L. Pantic (2014). This succinct study reviews current research on the contentious connection between social networking sites (SNS) and mental health issues, such as

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depressive symptoms, changes in self-esteem, and internet addiction. Numerous research point were made for a connection between prolonged usage of SNS like Facebook and depressive symptoms. Additionally, some experts contended that some SNS activities, particularly those involving children and adolescents, may be linked to low self-esteem. However, contradictory findings have also been known, pointing to social networking's beneficial effects on self-esteem. Despite ongoing study, there are still many concerns to be solved about the connection between SNS use and mental health problems.

Vela, J. C., Lerma, E., and Karaman, M. A. (2019). Investigating the elements that lead to academic stress among college students was the goal of this study. 307 undergraduate students in total 179 males and 128 women took part in the study. The results indicated that female students were more stressed out about their academics than male pupils. Academic stress was strongly predicted by gender, locus of control, and life satisfaction, according to bivariate correlations and multiple regression models. The study's conclusions explore the ramifications of these findings for counselors and make recommendations for future research.

Rationale of this Study

Network addiction, academic stress, and the mental health of student behavior and life are all topics of rational investigation. This study aids students in understanding how environmental influences affect their academic performance and emotional wellness. This study forecasts how students will behave in relation to their academic success and mental.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the gender-based difference between social networking addiction, academic stress and mental health among college students.

Hypothesis

There will be no significant gender-based difference between social networking addiction, academic stress and mental health among college students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample of present research consists of 140 college students. Sample was collected from different colleges through convenient sampling. The age range of sample was within 17-20 years. Only willing participants were selected for the study.

Tool Used

There are various methods and procedures that can be used in research. However, the adaption of a certain method and procedure depends on the nature of the problem being investigated. The investigator can accomplish efficiency in time and coordination effects with the aid of procedures. This approach is popular in the field of research.

Description of tools used

- 1. Social Networking Addiction Scale:** Social Networking Addiction Scale developed by Md Ghazi Shah Nawaz, Dr. Nivedita Ganguli & Manchong Limlunthang Zou was used to collect the data. The test is meant to understand the level of usage of social networking of individual personal social networking life. Exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation technique was used to extract the factors. The scale consists

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of 32 items under three factors of networking addiction, Factor 1 (Impulsivity), Factor 2 (Virtual Freedom) and Factor 3 (Negative Outcomes). This scale has 23 positive items and 9 negative items. It is a five point scale. Age norms of this scale is 16-18 years. The numerical value is assigned 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the positive items and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for the negative items. **Scoring:** for positive items (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) are strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree and reverse for the negative items. **Reliability:** Cronbach's alpha reliability of this scale is .94. This scale can be administered in a group setting as well as can be administered individually.

- 2. Academic Stress Scale:** Academic stress scale developed by Dr. Poorva Jain and Neelam Dikshit was used for collecting the data. Academic Stress Scale which intends to measure academic stress. It is based on five points Likert scale which we finds that it is starts from strongly agree means a person completely agree with the sentence to strongly disagree which means that the subject is not agree with the sentence which is written-by the following sequence: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively. It consists of 28 Items, pertaining to the issues related to academic failure. **Scoring:** All the statements are to be scored 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1 for strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. **Reliability & Validity:** the test- retest reliability co-efficient was .86 and reliability index was .93. The reliability coefficient for split half was .79 and reliability index was .89. The affirmative response was considered face validity of scale.
- 3. Mental Health Scale:** The Mental Health Scale is standardize scale developed by Dr. Sushma Talesara and Dr. Akhtar Bano. Mental Health has 54 statements and 3 areas of the test. This scale has 29 negative and 25 positive items. The numerical value is assigned 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 to the positive items and 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 to the 'negative' items. **Scoring:** for positive items (4, 3, 2, 1, 0) are always, often, sometimes, rarely, never and scoring for negative items (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are always, often, sometimes, rarely, never. Scoring mental health was used as a study tool for the data collection is developed with view to provide to a statistical tool for identifying persons having low mental health in life, and who may require psycho diagnostic help. Age range of this scale is 14 – 20.

Procedure

The data was collected from different colleges in Bhiwani, where participants were chosen for the data collection and a rapport built. The purpose of the current study was explained to them at the briefing. Instructions were given to participants, according to the questionnaire which was used in the study. They have been asked to be open and truthful in their response, because they have been guaranteed that their information would be kept private and used exclusively for research purposes. Questions were answered when needed. The completion of the offered survey questions or information took about 30 to 40 minutes. Different scales were then used, and information was gathered.

Statistical Technique:

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to collect and analyze the data. The Independent Sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The present study is designed to study the gender-based difference between social networking addiction, academic stress and mental health among college students. The collected data were used for mean difference calculation by independent sample T-test (one sample test).

Hypothesis 1.1:

There will be no significant gender-based difference between social networking addiction among college students.

The result are presented in table 4.1

Table 1: Social Networking Addiction (SNA) of girls and boys

Variable	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2 - tailed)	Mean Difference
Social networking addiction	Boys	70	100.17	21.164	1.056	0.293	3.000
Social networking addiction	Girls	70	97.17	10.820	1.056	0.293	3.000

Table 1. Showed that the gender-based difference between levels of social networking addiction. In this table the mean value for boys and girls are 100.17 and 97.17, SD value for both are 21.164 and 10.820. The t-test value for boys and girls are 1.056 and mean difference for both are 3.000. It was observed that the Sig. (2- tailed) test value for both boys and girls were 0.293 which is more than 0.05 (significant value). It means there is no significant difference between level of social networking addiction among girls and boys. This result clearly showed that the null hypothesis is accepted because of Sig. (2- tailed) value is more than 0.05 significance level. Hence our hypothesis “There will be no significant gender-based difference between social networking addictions among college students” has been accepted. According the result of this study the level of social networking addiction is similar in boys and girls. This study shows there is no gender-based difference in level of social networking addiction.

Hypothesis 1.2:

There will be no significant gender-based difference between academic stresses among college students.

Table 2: Academic Stress of girls and boys

Variable	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2 - tailed)	Mean Difference
Academic stress	Boys	70	91.57	10.152	1.110	0.269	2.186
Academic stress	Girls	70	89.39	12.974	1.110	0.269	2.186

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Table 2: Showed that the gender difference between level of academic stress. In this table the mean value for boys and girls are 91.57 and 89.39, SD value for both are 10.152 and 12.274. The t-test value for boys and girls are 1.110 and mean difference for both are 2.186. It can be observed that Sig. (2- tailed) value for both boys and girls were 0.269 which is more than 0.05 (significant value). It means there is no significant difference between level of academic stress among boys and girls students. This result clearly showed that the null hypothesis is accepted because of Sig. (2- tailed) value is more than 0.05 significance level. Hence our hypothesis “There will be no significant gender-based difference between academic stress among college students” has been accepted. This study shows there is no gender-based difference in level of academic stress. According the result of the study level of academic stress is similar in both girls and boys.

Hypothesis 1.3:

There will be no significant gender-based difference between mental healths among college students.

Table 3: Mental Health of girls and boys

Variable	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2 – tailed)	Mean Difference
Mental health	Boys	70	115.11	21.908	4.297	0.000	-17.500
Mental health	Girls	70	132.61	26.098	4.297	0.000	-17.500

Table 3: Showed that the gender-based difference between mental health. In this table mean value for boys and girls are 115.11 and 132.61, SD value for both are 21.908 and 26.098. The t-test value for boys and girls are -4.297 and mean difference for both are -17.500. It was observed that the Sig. (2- tailed) value for both boys and girls is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (significant value). Hence it indicates that the boys (M 115.11) and girls (M 132.61) does not have similar mental health. Girls mental health is better than boys students mental health. It means there is a significant difference between boys mental health and girls mental health. This result clearly showed that the null hypothesis is rejected because result is significant at 0.01(high level). Hence our hypothesis “There will be no significant gender-based difference between mental health among college students” has been rejected. According to this result girls mental health is better than boys mental health among college students.

Educational Implication:

College students and educational planners may find a number of educational implications from the evaluation of these types of variables social networking addiction, academic stress, and mental health and are helpful in many aspects. Which are:

- To examine how students behave in relation to their studies and their mental health.
- Understanding how external factors affect students academic performance and mental health is tremendously helpful.
- It aids the teacher in anticipating or displaying the conduct of the pupils.

CONCLUSION

Rapid growth of the internet and social media platforms has transformed the communication between people. Social networking sites and mobile applications allow individuals to share information, thoughts, feelings, and opinions, personal, social, and educational experiences. Excessive use of social networking sites has significantly impacted the students academic performances, including lower grades, reduce concentration, reduction in study time. In our study, it was observed that the social networking addiction and academic stress does not have any significant gender-based difference among boys and girls, while in case of mental health scenario the mental health of girls were better than the boys. This study shows that there is no gender-based difference in SNA and academic stress.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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