

## Virtual Socialization among College Students: An Analysis through Self-Esteem, Psychological Needs and Narcissism

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study is to determine whether there is a relationship between self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism among college students who are frequent and infrequent virtual socializers. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select 200 college students (100 boys and 100 girls), aged between 18-25 years. An Online Social Networking Scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Balanced Measure of Psychological Needs Scale (Sheldon, 2012) and Narcissism Personality Inventory (Raskin and Terry, 1988) were administered to measure the frequency of virtual socialization, level of self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism respectively. Significant differences were found between frequent and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimensions of self-deprecation, authority, self-sufficiency and exhibitionism ( $p < 0.05$ ). Significant gender differences were also found with respect to the exhibitionism and vanity dimensions of narcissism ( $p < 0.05$ ). The dimensions of self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism were significantly correlated in both the groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). In a technologically advanced time such as the present era, it is imperative to be aware of the influence of virtual socialization on behavioral traits of narcissism and self-esteem in college students and the effect on the creation of their concepts of themselves and how they protect their self-esteem and issues of identity.

**Keywords:** Degree of Virtual Socialization, Gender, Narcissism, Psychological Needs, Self-Esteem.

Users of social networking websites (SNWs) deem it a popular virtual meeting place which allows them to voluntarily post personal information, send and receive messages, stay connected online with their offline friends and new online friends, share photos, videos, bookmarks, blogs, private messages and join groups. The amount of time people spend on SNWs such as You Tube, Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Twitter, Hi5 etc. has brought about

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Received: June 28, 2017; Revision Received: July 28, 2017; Accepted: August 15, 2017

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changes in the way people behave. Socialization has been facilitated by these social networking websites which present to the users a variety of features (Iordache & Lamanuskas, 2013).

Virtual communication is communication generated by the internet, a world of virtuality, a world which is understood by some as a space of unreality and by others as a space of a parallel but artificial world. It represents the product of a contemporary, informational and an electronic society (Rotaru, 2014). Social networking websites provide users an opportunity to connect and interact online. People have isolated themselves, choosing to talk and form relationships primarily online rather than developing meaningful, face-to-face relationships.

This drawback arose due to increased use of SNWs (Alloway et al., 2014). Online social networking can facilitate valuable connections (Kriescher, 2009). Cain (2008) defined online social networking which refers to the online space that allows individuals to identify themselves, to refine their social networks, allow communication and interact with the virtual community. SNWs can be defined as alternative places for people to get connected which replace physical meeting of people as well, meetings in which information can be voluntarily shared (Din & Haron, 2012).

Nowadays, social networking sites are a part of college students' daily lives. Since the internet has provided anonymous, cost-free, and unfettered access to relevant sites, many students find online social networking an attractive platform. Online communication "offers a wide range of communicative, informational and entertainment services". It is also "a valuable tool for many people for forming, maintaining, and developing relationships" (Pornsakulvanich et al., 2008). The tendency of adolescents to prefer the virtual environment to discuss personal, intimate issues with close people and intimate friends has been stressed by authors. This phenomenon is explained by the fact that this environment provides individual control over the submitted information and therefore, a sense of security (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011).

Often Self-esteem is seen as a stable and enduring personality trait. Self-esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about the self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviors. According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem is formed as a consequence of one's self evaluation. The level of self-esteem is determined by the judgement one reaches as a result of self-evaluation. The emotions of self-worth, self-reliance and self-acceptance are reflected by one's self-esteem. It is also an important indication of all of our social interactions through which people are motivated to keep their self-esteem at a high level and preserve it. People who are high on self-esteem believe that they are talented, successful, valuable and important. Onen & Ulusoy (2015) defined positive self-esteem as a person wholly accepting himself/herself, esteeming and relying on himself/herself as an individual.

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To sustain an individual's existence and improvement, some of his/her basic psychological needs should be fulfilled. Psychological needs energize and direct behaviors intended to fulfill essential organismic necessities and foster growth and development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to Ryan (1995), psychological needs fuel self-integration, self-renewal, and self-expansion. This conceptual framework posits that human beings inherit three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. The satisfaction of the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness have been investigated as predictors of subjective well-being in different domains, such as work (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), education (Levesque, Zuehlke et al., 2004), social roles (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001), or as a function of daily fluctuations in needs fulfillment (Bozgeyikli, 2010).

Since the birth of an individual, there is a need for the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and the development of self-esteem is one of the important variables in such a process. One of the most current theories that try to explain the psychological needs and traits of an individual is the Self Determination Theory. The theory has been founded by Edward L. Deci in the 1970s, and was elaborated by Richard Ryan by collaborative work. It has been improving and has been increasing its effect for 40 years. Self Determination Theory shows that there are three basic needs of an individual: Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness; which aim to explain the factors for the sake of healthy development of individuals and societies. The individuals' own social development and state of well-being are based on these three basic needs and which are found necessary for the same. According to the theory, individuals work effectively and develop healthily in case all their three needs are met. However, people exhibit unwilling behaviors and negativity signs if the needs are not met (Ümmet, 2015). People seeking attention and admiration by boasting about their accomplishments (Buss & Chiodo, 1991) and take particular care of their physical appearance (Vazire, Naumann, Rentfrow, & Gosling, 2008) are the Narcissistic individuals who tend to be self-aggrandizing, vain, and exhibitionistic (Raskin & Terry, 1988).

The term narcissism comes from a tragic story of Greek Mythology about a youth named Narcissus, who fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water and started getting obsessed by it to the extent where he died in the end looking at it for weeks and months. Narcissism is characterized by a grandiose self-view, a sense of entitlement, lack of empathy and egotism, a term used in personality psychology to describe a socially disruptive personality trait. Narcissism is not seen as pathological personality disorder by clinical psychologists. But it has got a few offensive behavioral states that are not socially acceptable. they are, grandiose self-views, exhibitionism, entitlement, exploitativeness, superiority, authority, and self-sufficiency. These constructs are the areas of interest for many of the social-psychology researchers (Balaji & Balasundaram, 2014).

The recent growth in the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has stimulated some hypotheses regarding the psychological needs that underpin such widespread use. The dual factor model of Facebook use (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012) proposes that such use is

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motivated by two basic social needs: (1) the need to belong, which refers to the intrinsic drive to feel close and accepted by others and gain social acceptance; and (2) the need for self-presentation, which is associated with the process of impression management. The central role that the need to belong has in determining behavior has been already underlined by Baumeister and Leary (1995).

The analysis of the content and impression value of 130 Facebook accounts by Buffardi and Campbell (2008) brought about certain findings that suggest that the number of Facebook friends and wall posts that individuals have on their profile pages correlates with narcissism which is practiced in real life by having numerous shallow relationships. Narcissists choose glamorous self-promoting pictures for their main profile photos which reinforce negative real traits. (Shafie et al., 2012). Users found high on Narcissism prefer to post photos of themselves and update their status frequently as founded by research. They also check their accounts more often and spend more time online. (La Sala & Grant, 2014). Also grandiose states are actually a defensive maneuver with the function of mitigating feelings of low self-esteem and masking a deep-lying sense of inferiority and shame (Veronese et al., 2015).

From the literature reviewed, it was found that the four variables i.e. virtual socialization, self-esteem, basic psychological needs and narcissism have not been studied together and to the best of the researcher's knowledge there is a paucity of studies conducted in the context of an Indian setting with respect to college students who differ in the frequency of their virtual socialization. In this context, the objectives of the present study was to observe the role of the frequency of virtual socialization (frequent and infrequent) and gender (men and women) on the two dimensions of self-esteem (self-confidence and self-deprecation), the three dimensions of psychological needs (relatedness, competence and autonomy) and the seven dimensions of narcissism (authority, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, vanity, entitlement and sufficiency) in college students. This study also aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism in frequent and infrequent virtual socializers.

### **METHODOLOGY**

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

The present study adopts a between-groups design to determine whether there are any gender differences between college students who are frequent and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimensions of self-esteem (viz., self-confidence and self-deprecation), psychological needs (viz., relatedness, competence and autonomy) and narcissism (viz., authority, superiority, exhibitionism, entitlement, vanity and self-sufficiency). This study also adopts a correlational design to determine whether there is a relationship between the dimensions of self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism among college students who are frequent and infrequent virtual socializers.

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### *Sample*

A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to select a sample of 200 college students, aged 18 – 23 years. Out of the total sample, 100 were girls (50 post-graduates and 50 under-graduates) and 100 were boys (50 post-graduates and 50 under-graduates). College students who had access to any of the social networking sites regularly and those who had access to any gadgets like a smartphone, laptop, computer, i-pod and i-pad were considered for this study.

### *Instruments*

- 1. Information Schedule:** Participants were asked to provide details regarding their gender, age, education, family information, socio-economic status, physical and psychological health, and the like in the Information Schedule.
- 2. The online social networking scale:** Participants were asked to fill in a self-report inventory that had 19 items. The scale measures virtual socialization in college students. The types of responses were a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, Yes or No questions, A 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “Always” to “Never” and questions with options with preference. Some of the survey questions were “How many social networking sites or communities are you a member of?” “On average, how much time do you spend on social networking sites?” The Spearman Brown split-half reliability was computed for this scale and it was found to be 0.435.
- 3. The Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale:** This scale was constructed by Rosenberg (1965). This scale has 10 items and 2 dimensions, namely self-confidence and self-depreciation, with 5 items for each. It is a self-report inventory with a 4-point Likert scale and responses range from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. The score for the items in each dimension are added separately. The maximum possible score is 30 and minimum is 0. Its test-retest reliability is 0.85. For construct validity the self-esteem variable has been correlated with anxiety and has a measure of 0.64. It has a measure of 0.54 with depression and 0.43 with anomie.
- 4. Basic Psychological Needs Scale:** This scale was constructed by Deci and Ryan (2000) and has 18 items. The variable it measures is psychological needs. It is a self-report inventory with 3 dimensions, namely, autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy can be defined as when a person take into consideration one’s own intrinsic processes, have the ability of acting independently and self-approval while deciding (Ümmet, 2015). Competence is the ability of making necessary regulations and organizations for reaching the person’s goal, and having the perception of self-confidence for accomplishing them (Ümmet, 2015). Relatedness can be defined as a form of confidence to others’ support and guidance (Ümmet, 2015). The dimension of autonomy has a reliability measure of 0.68, competence has a measure of 0.75 and relatedness has a measure of 0.84. Each dimension has 6 items. The scale has a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. The items in each dimension are added separately for scoring.

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**5. Narcissistic Personality Inventory:** This inventory was adapted from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Terry, 1979) in 1988. It is a self-report inventory and has 40 items. The scale has 7 dimensions, namely- authority, superiority, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, entitlement, vanity and self-sufficiency. It contains questions with 2 response options (A or B). The items in each dimension are added separately. It has a reliability of 0.66.

### *Procedure*

After selecting the measures, a few arrangements were made for data collection. The questionnaires and the Information Schedule were prepared and organized. The authorities of various colleges were contacted for permission to collect data from different colleges. The researcher visited the colleges that gave permission for data collection on the scheduled dates. Rapport was established with various under-graduate and post-graduate students of the different colleges and they were made aware that their participation in the study was purely voluntary and were assured of confidentiality throughout the study. The students who agreed to participate in the study were requested to sign an 'Informed Consent Form'. Next, the Information Schedule was administered. The students who met the criteria of the study were screened. On the next appointment the participants were given instructions for the questionnaires (namely, Selfies Scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, Basic Psychological Needs Scale and Narcissistic Personality Inventory) and were requested to respond to each of the items. There was no fixed time limit for any of the questionnaires. However, the respondents were asked to complete each questionnaire in about 45 minutes.

## RESULTS

*Table 1 – Results of Two-Way ANOVA and descriptive statistics with degree of virtual socialization and gender as the IVs and the 2 dimensions of self-esteem, 7 dimensions of narcissism and 3 dimensions of basic psychological needs as the DVs.*

Variables	Degree of virtual socialization			Gender			VS*Gen F
	Infrequent	Frequent	F	Male	Female	F	
	M(SD)	M(SD)		M(SD)	M(SD)		
Self-Confidence	11.7(2.31)	11.4(2.39)	0.61	11.71(2.11)	11.56(2.57)	0.093	0.1
Self-Depreciation	7.58(2.68)	8.38(2.85)	4.67*	8.10(2.59)	7.88(2.99)	0.83	0.35
Autonomy	0.65(2.72)	1.00(2.79)	1.14	1.10(3.00)	0.66(2.49)	1.12	0
Competence	1.93(3.12)	1.51(2.97)	0.78	1.86(3.20)	1.59(2.90)	0.21	0.06
Relatedness	1.85(3.60)	2.03(2.83)	0.25	2.09(3.41)	1.81(3.04)	0.46	0.32
Authority	4.03(2.01)	3.44(1.86)	4.302*	3.80(2.03)	3.67(1.89)	0.01	2.4
Self-sufficiency	2.61(1.23)	2.03(1.34)	7.86**	2.54(1.33)	2.11(1.27)	3.45	0.46
Superiority	2.53(1.23)	2.13(1.32)	3.71	2.49(1.26)	2.18(1.30)	1.85	0.04
Exhibitionism	2.69(1.82)	2.09(1.83)	3.74*	2.73(1.85)	2.06(1.77)	5.32*	5.43*
Exploitativeness	1.49(1.14)	1.29(1.31)	0.95	1.48(1.32)	1.31(1.14)	0.63	0.19
Vanity	1.19(0.79)	1.20(1.04)	0.04	1.07(0.86)	1.33(0.96)	4.03*	6.79**
Entitlement	2.45(1.21)	2.27(1.55)	0.47	2.49(1.36)	2.24(1.42)	1.26	0.02

\*\* p<0.01

\*p<0.05

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Table 1 reveals that there is a significant difference between frequent and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimension of self-deprecation ( $F= 4.67, p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, frequent virtual socializers ( $M=8.38$ ) scored significantly higher than infrequent virtual socializers ( $M=7.58$ ) with respect to the dimension of self-deprecation. In other words, frequent virtual socializers evaluate themselves more negatively than infrequent virtual socializers.

Table 1 also reveals that there is a significant difference between frequent virtual socializers and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimension of authority ( $F=4.302, p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, infrequent virtual socializers ( $M=4.03$ ) scored significantly higher than frequent virtual socializers ( $M=3.44$ ) with respect to the dimension of authority. In other words, infrequent virtual socializers have higher levels of adaptive self-functioning traits and are more self-aware than frequent virtual socializers.

Moreover, table 1 reveals that there is a significant difference between frequent virtual socializers and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimension of self-sufficiency ( $F=7.86, p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, infrequent virtual socializers ( $M=2.61$ ) scored considerably higher than frequent virtual socializers ( $M=2.03$ ) with respect to the dimension of self-sufficiency. In other words, infrequent virtual socializers have considerably lower levels of social anxiety and personal distress and higher levels of social potency and resilience.

Table 1 further reveals that there is a significant difference between frequent virtual socializers and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to the dimension of exhibitionism ( $F=3.74, p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, infrequent virtual socializers ( $M=2.69$ ) scored considerably higher than frequent virtual socializers ( $M=2.09$ ) with respect to the dimension of exhibitionism. In other words, infrequent virtual socializers are higher on levels of attention-seeking behavior than frequent virtual socializers. There is also a significant gender difference with respect to the dimension of exhibitionism ( $F= 5.32, p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, men ( $M=2.73$ ) scored considerably higher than women ( $M=2.06$ ), which means that men exhibit attention-seeking behavior more than women.

Finally, table 1 reveals that there is a significant difference between men and women with respect to the dimension of vanity ( $F= 4.03, p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, women ( $M=1.33$ ) scored considerably higher than men ( $M=1.07$ ) with respect to the dimension of vanity. In other words women have the quality of having pride in their own abilities than men. There has been found an interaction effect between the frequency of virtual socialization and gender with respect to the dimensions of exhibitionism ( $r= 5.43, p<0.05$ ) and vanity ( $r= 6.79, p<0.01$ ). In other words there has been found an interaction effect between the frequency of virtual socialization and the gender with respect to exhibitionism (attention seeking behavior) and vanity (having pride in their own abilities).

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*Table 2- Results of the correlation between the two dimensions of self-esteem, the three dimensions of basic psychological needs and the seven dimensions of narcissism in frequent virtual socializers.*

<b>Correlations</b>					
	<b>Self-confidence</b>	<b>Self-deprecation</b>	<b>Relatedness</b>	<b>Competence</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
<b>Relatedness</b>	.381 **	.402 **			
<b>Competence</b>	.351 **	.329 **	.452 **		
<b>Autonomy</b>	.322 **	.314 **	.353 **	.624 **	
<b>Authority</b>	.167	.175	.019	-.130	-.118
<b>Self-sufficiency</b>	.257 **	.118	.018	-.033	.095
<b>Superiority</b>	.192	-.133	-.108	-.097	-.100
<b>Exhibitionism</b>	.055	-.223 *	-.103	-.046	-.110
<b>Exploitativeness</b>	.029	.049	.042	-.080	.013
<b>Vanity</b>	-.006	-.175	-.159	-.115	-.179
<b>Entitlement</b>	.046	-.170	-.109	-.171	-.152

\*\* p<0.01

\* p<0.05

The results of table 2 show that there is a significant positive correlation between the dimension of self-confidence and the dimensions of relatedness ( $r=0.381$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), competence ( $r=0.351$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), autonomy ( $r=0.322$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and self-sufficiency ( $r=0.257$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in frequent virtual socializers. This shows that higher the self-confidence, higher the relatedness, competence, autonomy and self-sufficiency in frequent virtual socializers.

The results of table 2 further show that there is a significant positive correlation between the dimension of self-deprecation and the dimensions of relatedness ( $r=0.402$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), competence ( $r=0.329$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), autonomy ( $r=0.314$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and exhibitionism ( $r= -0.223$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) in frequent virtual socializers. This shows that higher the self-deprecation, higher the relatedness, competence, autonomy and exhibitionism in frequent virtual socializers. In other words, the self-esteem of frequent virtual socializers has a positive correlation with their experiences of self-ownership, their ability to be competent and their experiences of closeness and connected with others. The fulfillment of basic psychological needs has an influence on the self-esteem of individuals who frequently socialize in virtual settings. Also, individuals of the same category who have low self-esteem exhibit lower levels of attention-seeking behavior in a virtual setting even as their basic psychological needs have been met.

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*Table 3- Results of the correlation between the dimensions of self-esteem, basic psychological needs and narcissism in infrequent virtual socializers.*

<b>Correlations</b>					
	<b>Self-confidence</b>	<b>Self-deprecation</b>	<b>Relatedness</b>	<b>Competence</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
<b>Relatedness</b>	.235*	.208*			
<b>Competence</b>	.204*	.180	.586**		
<b>Autonomy</b>	.153	.267**	.373**	.469**	
<b>Authority</b>	.384**	.061	.095	.225*	.154
<b>Self-sufficiency</b>	.059	-.076	-.113	.015	-.037
<b>Superiority</b>	.203*	.099	.008	.088	-.048
<b>Exhibitionism</b>	.078	-.195	-.151	-.014	-.216*
<b>Exploitativeness</b>	.038	-.075	-.069	.037	.029
<b>Vanity</b>	.241*	-.078	-.040	-.049	.007
<b>Entitlement</b>	.047	-.280**	-.085	.099	-.014

\* p<0.05

\*\* p<0.01

Table3 shows that there is a significantly positive correlation between the dimensions of self-confidence and the dimensions of relatedness ( $r=0.235$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and competence ( $r=0.204$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), authority ( $r=0.384$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), superiority ( $r=0.203$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and vanity ( $r=0.241$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) in infrequent virtual socializers. This shows that higher the self-confidence, higher the relatedness, competence, authority, superiority and vanity in infrequent virtual socializers. In other words, the self-confidence of an individual has a positive correlation with the experiences of closeness with others and the ability to be competent in infrequent virtual socializers. Also the self-confidence of infrequent virtual socializers has a relationship with their characteristics of dominance, assertiveness, leadership, their capacity for status and social presence and their levels of vanity.

Table 3 also shows that there is significant positive correlation between the dimension of self-deprecation and the dimensions of relatedness ( $r=0.208$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), autonomy ( $r=0.267$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and that the dimension of self-deprecation is negatively correlated with the dimension of entitlement ( $r=0.280$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in infrequent virtual socializers. This shows that higher the self-deprecation, higher the relatedness, autonomy and lower the self-deprecation higher the entitlement in infrequent virtual socializers. In other words the self-esteem of infrequent virtual socializers has a relationship with their need for power, dominance, hostility and toughness.

Further, table 3 shows that there the dimension of competence has a significant positive correlation with the dimension of authority ( $r=0.225$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This shows that higher the competence, higher the authority in infrequent virtual socializers. It is clear that traits of

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leadership and authority have are related to the ability to be competent in infrequent virtual socializers. Finally, the results show that the dimension of autonomy has a significant negative correlation with the dimension of exhibitionism ( $r = -0.216, p < 0.05$ ). This shows that lower the autonomy, higher the levels of exhibitionism in infrequent virtual socializers. In other words, the need for self-ownership has a negative correlation with attention-seeking behavior in individuals who are infrequent virtual socializers.

### DISCUSSION

The mass appeal of social networks on the Internet could potentially be a cause for concern, particularly when attending to the gradually increasing amounts of time people spend online. Social Networking Sites are virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests. SNSs are “web-based services that allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. Therefore, the current study intends to provide empirical evidence about the emerging phenomenon of social networking and to establish the association between the frequency with which individuals virtually socialize and the two dimensions of self-esteem, the three dimensions of basic psychological needs and the seven dimensions of narcissism.

The main findings indicate significant differences between high frequency virtual socializers and low frequency virtual socializers with respect to the dimensions of self-esteem, basic psychological needs and narcissism. Also, gender differences were found with respect to the dimensions of the same variables. And, significant correlations were observed between the variables of frequency of virtual socialization, self-esteem, basic psychological needs and narcissism.

The present study has reported a significant difference between frequent virtual socializers and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to self-deprecation dimension of self-esteem proving that, frequent virtual socializers evaluate themselves more negatively. When adolescents express themselves in dating sites, social networking sites and gaming sites, studies have revealed that they tend to appear different from what they are (Madell & Muncer, 2006). Negative evaluation of self and the world may be the maladaptive cognitions (Kim & Davis, 2009). Ellison et al., (2007) examined the association between the self-esteem of adolescents and their use of some social networking sites showing that, the adolescents with low self-esteem tend to spend more time in social networking sites than those with higher self-esteem.

As stated by Griffith (2000), there is an association between participants' use of the Internet and how they perceive such usage as a coping style and way of a compensation of some deficiencies such as low self-esteem. According to Griffith (2000), because it is an alternative for which they take different personality and social identity, it allows them to feel better. In

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other words, they highly satisfy themselves in this way. As can be seen, increasing internet use may turn into a dependent relationship as individuals who evaluate themselves negatively may perceive the internet as a way to compensate for these negations. Self-esteem is an important determinant of individuals' behaviors and activities. Some of these activities are harmful for personal development while some support the development of an individual (Aydm, & San, (2011). Barker (2009) found that peer group communication via SNSs positively correlated with collective self-esteem and group identification. With regards to SNS usage motivations researchers assessed social presence i.e., the recognition that other persons share the same virtual realm, the endorsement of group norms, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity and social enhancement (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011).

Furthermore, results show significant gender differences with respect to exhibitionism and vanity dimensions of narcissism. The study also reveals significant differences between frequent virtual socializers and infrequent virtual socializers with respect to authority, self-sufficiency and exhibitionism dimensions of narcissism. Bergman et al., (2011) found that narcissism was not a strong predictor of either frequency of status updates or time spent on SNS and suggested that the use of social networking sites is not a means of attention seeking behavior, rather it is a means of staying connected. Narcissistic individuals are characterized by a positive and exaggerated view of themselves, especially concerning their physical attractiveness. One of the most physical aspects of a user's online self-presentation is their profile picture on Facebook. Facebook manages at being very effective at increasing the spotlight on the user as it directs attention towards reporting changes regarding the user's personal profile. Narcissistic individuals therefore may use this tool to direct attention to them (Alloway et al., 2014).

Moreover, significant correlations were observed between self-confidence, self-deprecation dimensions of self-esteem and relatedness, competence, autonomy dimensions of basic psychological needs, and self-sufficiency dimension of narcissism in frequent virtual socializers. Significant correlations were also found between the self-confidence of self-esteem; relatedness, competence dimensions of basic psychological needs; and authority, superiority, vanity, entitlement dimensions of narcissism in infrequent virtual socializers. Along the line, the results of a survey carried out by Kuss & Griffiths (2011), comprising 170 US university students pointed out to social factors rather than individual factors to be more important motivations for SNS usage. More specifically, the interdependent self-construal of these participants (i.e., the endorsement of collectivist cultural values) rather than independent self-construal, which refers to the adoption of individualist values that led to SNS usage that in turn, resulted in higher levels of satisfaction. Besides this, Kernberg (1998) argued that narcissists possess abnormal self-structures and exhibit pathological self-esteem regulation strategies. Likewise, Kohut (1966) believed that narcissists possess a self-concept characterized by grandiosity and over ambition as well as exhibitionist drives (Ackerman et al., 2010). Grandiosity is reflected in arrogant attitudes, inflated self-esteem, and

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interpersonal behaviors characterized by exploitativeness, entitlement, and exhibitionism (Ackerman et al., 2010).

### CONCLUSION

The study revealed significant results in terms of frequency of virtual socialization, but knowledge of other personality traits can shed more light on the characteristics of individuals who are frequent as well as infrequent virtual socializers. The study could further be replicated with a larger population that takes into consideration not just college students but individuals holding a vocation. Besides the significant differences found between the dimensions of self-esteem, psychological needs and narcissism with respect to the frequency of virtual socialization, the study can be taken forward by probing into the effects of virtual socialization in individuals from a lower socio-economic background who are new to virtual communities by taking their personality traits into account including their levels of self-esteem and narcissistic traits. The study provides researchers with suggestions for new empirical directions of high importance to the understanding of the effects of virtual socialization on academic achievement and social competence. This study highlights the role of mental health professionals to increase self-confidence and decrease self-deprecation and make the youth aware of the effects of virtual socialization.

### Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

**Conflict of Interests:** The author declared no conflict of interests.

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**How to cite this article:** Sanyal N, Fernandes & Vundi R (2017). Virtual Socialization among College Students: An Analysis through Self-Esteem, Psychological Needs and Narcissism. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, Vol. 4, (4)*, DIP:18.01.042/20170404, DOI:10.25215/0404.042