



ADDICTION TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN YOUNG GENERATION OF TRIPURA



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ABSTRACT

This study intends to know whether the pattern of emotional adjustment, social adjustment, feeling of loneliness and parent child relationship of high social network users of Tripura are different from that of average network users, For this purpose a group of 50 young adults of Tripura who remains in social networking sites more than 21 hours or above per week and has symptoms of SNS addiction was compared with a group of 50 young adults who only remains online 7 hours or below per week and has no SNS addiction symptom. Result revealed that the social adjustment and emotional adjustment of both groups are same but the extent of loneliness is high among high users. The parent child relationship is also distorted in the high user group.

KEY WORDS: *Emotional adjustment, social adjustment, loneliness, parent-child relationship, social networking site (SNS) users.*

INTRODUCTION

Addiction to SNS may create loneliness in adolescents and young adults, as some researchers claim. According to Johannah Cornblatt(2009), Social-networking sites may provide people with a false sense of connection that ultimately increases loneliness in people who feel alone. Social networking usage also can foster feelings of sensitivity to disconnection, which can lead to loneliness (John T. Cacioppo, 2009). Excessive time spending in SNS is responsible for decreased family time, relationship problems, lower productivity in employment, continuation of false information and the increasing of psychological problems (Beard, 2005).

Some researchers also claim that social network addicts suffer from emotional maladjustment. A recent article in the Scientific American suggests that people, who rapidly move around on dozens of websites, engaging in fleeting contact, are most likely to get depressed. Peer-to-peer file sharing, heavy emailing and chatting online, and a tendency to quickly switch between multiple websites and other online resources all predict a greater propensity to experience symptoms of depression.

The self- presentation of a person in an online activity may prevent him from being judged for his appearance or personality style (Kandell, 1998). Therefore students are more likely to develop problems with internet than others. Many studies have been conducted using DSM- based criteria and showed higher rates in internet use among college students than in general population (Morahan- Martin & Schumacher, 2000, Yang and Tung, 2004). In the literature there is a great number of studies showing that Internet addiction has been related to many variables apart from social skills such as gender and internet expertise (Morahan-Martin, 1997), age and grade level(Johansson and Gtestam, 2004), online experiences and the amount of time spent online (Morahan-Martin, 1999), depression, with increased levels of depression being associates with internet addiction (Young, Rogers, 1998), and impulse control disorder (Shapira, 2003).Social skills are a fundamental factor in the development of the relationships. They include all the behaviours that a person should have in his/her interactions and communication with other people (Teodoro, 2005). Caplan (2002) developed



a theory imploring deficient social skills. The author claimed that people who are depressive and lonely tend to have a negative view towards their social skills. Another explanation can be that people who tend to be low in social skills are attracted by some special features of online communication. These features allow the person to adopt another self-presentation that cannot be developed through face to face interaction. Through this, a person may exaggerate and present himself different than he is in real life (Caplan, 2002). Thus, for some people SNS is a place much easier and safe because of its anonymity and because it requires less interpersonal communication. It is a place less stressful where they can control their social skills better than having a face to face interaction (Shaw & Black, 2008). There have not been conducted a lot of studies until now that measure internet addiction and social skills in college students. Most of the studies focused on excessive internet use and how it affects the development of social skills in children and adolescents (Harman, Hansen, Cochran, & Lindsey, 2005). However, there is a contradiction in the literature referring to the specific aspects of social skills and internet addiction. Engelberg (2004) in his study about internet use, social skills and social adjustment found out that individuals who use excessively internet tend to be lonelier and have problems in their social adjustment in work and in their spare time. On the other hand, another research found out that by talking online in chat rooms, loneliness is reduced and social support is increased (Waestlund, Norlander, & Archer, 2001). Also another study conducted by Morahan-Martin (2003) found out that lonely people tend to use internet for emotional support and that their social behaviour is increased by making online friends. In a study it was shown that shyness and locus of control were associated with internet addiction. It was found that persons scored higher levels of internet addiction tend to be shier and indicating more difficulties in their social life. (Chack & Leung, 2004). Most of the studies that have been conducted measured some specific aspects of social skills like loneliness, shyness and social adjustment and social comfort. There is also contradiction in the studies referring to loneliness and social comfort, with studies indicating different results (Engelberg, 2004; Waestlund et al., 2001).

Parenting style and parent child relationship is closely associated with SNS addiction.

Good parenting, including parental warmth and affection, has been associated with lower risk for SNS addiction. On the other hand bad parenting, including parental control and intrusion that is authoritarian and

neglectful, has been associated with higher risk for addiction. Some of the studies done to date suggest that adolescents who have trouble relating to their parents might be at higher risk for a problematically high level of Internet use. Those who are socially withdrawn or lonely might also be more likely to spend excessive time online. This withdrawal and loneliness may be created from faulty parenting style. It is also assumed that the way kids bonded with their parents would predict aspects of their personality as young adults, which in turn would predict their likelihood of Internet addiction. Surveys found that degrees of spending in online have become predictive factor of parent and child relationship. Near 60% NET fans have bitter relationship with parents. Experts suggest that parents, if their children spend a greater time in net surfing, will have to pay attention to how to improve parent-child relationship (Carpenter Church, the Church Community Center survey 2004). In a study, Liu CY and Kuo FY (2007) attempted to identify predictors of Internet addiction based on Sullivan's interpersonal theory and Internet addiction literature. It is hypothesized that good parent-child relationship positively correlates with good interpersonal relationships.

So, previous studies have presented conflicting claims regarding reasons that people become addicted to the Internet and the effect they bear in people's mind. From the above discussion and relevant literature survey, a research need has been envisaged to study the emotional adjustment, social adjustment, loneliness and parent child relationship of high social network user and average social network user youths of the state of Tripura. The objective of the study was as follows:

1. To study whether any difference exists in the emotional adjustment of high social network users and average social network users.
2. To study whether any difference exists in the social adjustment of high social network users and average social network users.
3. To study whether there exist any difference in the loneliness level of high social network users and average social network users.
4. To study whether there exist any difference in parent child Relationship of high social network users and average social network users.

METHOD

1. Sample:-

The Sample consists of 100 youths who live in different urban areas of Tripura. Their age ranges from 19-23 years. The minimum educational qualification was

up to higher secondary level. All of them have come from middle or high middle socio-economic families. All have the facility to use internet. The sample was divided into two groups keeping all the above said factors constant, except the following:

- The first group comprises of youth who use social network sites 21 hours or above per week. These groups were named as high social network users. On the other hand the second group comprises of youths who remains online on social networking sites 7 hours or below per week.
- With help of a semi structured questionnaire, youngsters who possess signs of **Salience** (Using the SNS dominates the person's life, feelings and behavior), **Mood modification** (The person experiences changes in mood when using the SNS), **Tolerance** (Increasing amounts of SNS use are needed to achieve the same effects on mood) and **Withdrawal** (if the person stops using the SNS, they experience unpleasant feelings) are selected for participation in first group. But the participants of the second group were free from such symptoms. Purposive sampling procedure was taken in all levels of sampling.

2. Instruments Used:-

Four psychological tests and one semi structured questionnaire were used to collect data from the sample subgroups. The psychological tests used were:

a) Adolescent Emotional Adjustment Inventory:-

This inventory is an useful device to assess emotional adjustment of higher secondary & college going pupils. The inventory was devised by Dr.R.V.Patil (Karnataka, India, 1989).The test has 33 items followed by 'Yes' & 'No' responses. There is no time limit but usually subject takes 30-45 minutes to finish the work.

The score ranges from 33-66.Low score indicates better adjustment & vice versa. The Split-half reliability co-efficient of the test was found out .82 & Test-retest reliability was .87 by the author. The validity coefficient was calculated with the Tiwari & Srivastava's adjustment inventory & it was found .77 & .80 respectively.

b) Social Adjustment Inventory:-

This is also a useful device to assess social adjustment of higher secondary and college going pupils. The test was prepared by Dr.Roma Pal (1985).The test has 60 items followed by Yes or No responses. If the subject agreed with the statement then gives tick mark before the column Yes and if don't agree then put tick mark

before No. He or She was requested to respond all the statements without leaving any one. There is no time limit but usually subject takes 30-45 minutes to finish it. The total score may range from 60-120.Here also, low score indicates better adjustment & vice versa.

Split half reliability of the test was found out .82 & the test Retest reliability (with an interval of one month) was found .87.For finding out the validity of this inventory it was Correlated with Tiwari & Srivastava's adjustment inventory. The Validity co-efficient was .77 & .80 respectively.

c) Loneliness scale:-

The revised UCLA loneliness scale was used to collect data. This test was devised by Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona in 1980.The test comprises of 20 items. The test is highly reliable with a co efficient of alpha .96. The test retest correlation was .73. It has a high validity coefficient measuring .79. The score ranges from 20-80. High score indicates high level of loneliness and vice versa.

d) Parent-Child relationship Scale:-

The scale was devised by wamboldt M Z, Wamboldt F S, Gavin L, M C Taggart A S (2001).The scale can be potentially used to assess the child's perspective of the parent-child relationship. The test comprises of 100 items. In each statement child has to assess the behavior of father & mother towards him or her. The score ranges from 200-1030.Low score indicates better parent-child relationship & vice versa.

The PCRS has good internal reliability (Cronbach alpha =.72).construct validity was demonstrated by correlation with child & parent report on the family assessment device (r= .46 & .35,p<.001).

3. Hypotheses:-

Four hypotheses were formulated for drawing inference from the present study:

1. There is no significant difference in the emotional adjustment of high social network users and average social network users.
2. There is no significant difference in the social adjustment of high social network users and average social network users.
3. There is no significant difference in the loneliness level of high social network users and average social network users.
4. There is no significant difference in parent child Relationship of high social network users and average social network users.

5.Procedure:-

Contact was made with each and every subject personally and informed consent was taken from them. According to their time schedule interview was taken. After establishing proper rapport and developing confidence on part of the subject, information about him or her was collected by a semi structured questionnaire. On the basis of the answers of that primary questionnaire, it was decided whether the subject fulfills the criteria of participation in the study. Once he or she was selected, then each and every Subject was given a relevant questionnaire and instructed to go through the instructions. After the respondent has understood what he or she has to do, he

or she is allowed to answer the questionnaire. After the end of the testing, answers were checked with the help of the relevant scoring key. Data were taken in two different sessions from each respondent, taking responses of two questionnaires in each session. After the collection of data and appropriate scoring, data were tabulated properly & necessary calculation was conducted.

RESULT

The collected data from two groups of respondents and from four questionnaires are now compiled and after necessary calculation they are tabulated as below in the following table:

TABLE-I

Shows the Mean, SD and t-value of emotional adjustment, social adjustment, loneliness and parent-child relationship score of high social network users and average social network users.

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Level of significance
Emotional Adjustment	Group I	50	44.98	5.4	.930	98	insignificant
	Group II	50	44.06	4.44			
Social Adjustment	Group I	50	94.2	6.46	-.233	98	insignificant
	Group II	50	94.44	7.22			
Loneliness	Group I	50	46.00	4.03	6.489	98	Significant at 0.01 level
	Group II	50	39.38	5.98			
Parent-Child Relationship	Group I	50	631.04	62.81	2.230	98	Significant at 0.05 level
	Group II	50	599.12	79.36			

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Table-I shows the mean and SD of emotional adjustment score of high social network users and average social network users. The mean of the 1st group was 44.98 with SD 5.4 and the mean of the 2nd group was 44.06 with SD 4.44. So the central tendency of the two groups laid almost in same level.

Data related to the social adjustment shows the mean and SD of high social network users and average social network users. Here mean of Group-I is 94.12 with SD 6.46 and in Group-II the mean is 94.44 with SD 7.22. Here also the means are almost in same level.

Result of loneliness score indicates that the mean and SD of Group-I was 46 and 4.03 respectively and in Group-II Mean is 39.38 with SD 5.98. It appears that there lies a bit difference in between these two means.

Data related to the 3rd variable, i.e. parent-child relationship shows the mean and SD of high social network users & average social network users. It reveals that Group-I has the mean of 631.04 with SD 62.81 and Group-II has the mean of 599.12 with SD 79.36. There also lies difference between the means as it appears from the general observation.

In the next step it was intended to analyze whether these apparent differences or no differences in means are statistically significant difference or not. For this purpose t-test between the groups has been calculated and compiled in the table. It signifies that the t-value of Group-I and Group-II in respect of emotional adjustment is .93 (df=98). The value is insignificant which means that there is no real difference in between the emotional adjustment score of high social network users and average social network users. The t-value between the Group-I and Group-II in respect of social adjustment score is -.233 (df=98). This t-value is also insignificant which implies that these two groups do not differ significantly in respect of their social adjustment.

The t-value between the Group-I and Group-II in respect of loneliness is 6.489 (df=98). This value is highly significant at .01 level. It indicates that Group-I is significantly lonelier than the Group-II.

The t-value of parent child relationship score of these two Groups is 2.23 (df=98). The table of critical value of t interprets this value as significant at .05 level. As the mean score of Group-I is larger than the Group-II it can be safely said that the parent child relationship is better in Group-II than the Group-I.

From the above discussion the following conclusions can be drawn. The social adjustment and emotional adjustment pattern of high social network users and average social network users are almost same. But the high social network users are lonelier than the youth who use social networks with more control. This loneliness may be a cause or may be an effect which induces them to withdraw themselves in the fantasy world of virtual reality. The family relationship pattern of these social networks savvy youths is also not satisfactory as they perceived their relationship with their parents as disturbed one. Their regression in the world of virtual reality may be an effect of their unsatisfactory relationship with their parents which makes them lonely in their own self.

As Rudall (1996) remarks, and many other psychologists also assumes that we should not be surprised at the evolution of new behavioral conditions when technological advances are changing our society so rapidly and in such revolutionary ways. We must be prepared to face the notion that the SNS is changing the way we live, and not always for the better. Young (1999) writes that the study of Internet addiction is often complicated by the perceived value of technological growth, by the societal promotion of Internet use, and by the positive image of the Internet. But we can keep mind another view like Kandell's (1998) who suggests, although exercise is good and people require it, over exercise may have a destructive impact on human health. Addictive SNS use may be similar in the disparity of its impact and it is determined exclusively by the amount and type of use. The findings of this research suggest that overuse or abuse of SNS can have negative influences on our lives. So we should go through the modern technology with more caution. As Stern (1999) states, technologies, by definition, increase our capacities and abilities. However, at the same time, they may also lead to maladaptive behavior and expose both our frailties and inabilities. The young generation must recognize that technologies are bound to impact them in both positive and negative ways. The young generation of our country especially this small state of India, is going through a rapid change, adaptation to which needs some special skill. Research on SNS addiction is one step toward understanding and evaluating the effects of these impacts. Kandell (1998) remarked that college students are more vulnerable in developing internet dependence than any other group of society.

The finding of the present study is supported by the earlier finding of Kraut et al, 1998 who claimed that children and youngsters using internet much are becoming lonelier and experience difficulties in making

contact face-to-face. Gross, 2004 also emphasized that communication through internet is quite important for today's youngsters and computer games and internet may cause social isolation replacing the friend of child or youngster. Almost alike the present finding, many others found relation between internet addiction and loneliness (Caplan, 2002; Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, 2000; Özcan and Buzlu, 2007; Park and Hong; 2012). Chou and Hsiao (2000) said that internet isolated people from social life and limits real social relations, therefore people become lonelier. Contradictory evidences are also not rare as shown in another study that there is no relation between loneliness and internet addiction (Hills and Argyle, 2003).

Another finding of the present study is that SNS addiction induces distorted parent child relationship. Previous studies of Young's (1996) reveals that internet addiction affects individuals' family, social and professional life negatively. Generally youngsters, using SNS excessively, try to keep it as a secret from their families and therefore deterioration in family relations rises. SNS addicted youths spend less time with people around them. This affects interpersonal relations negatively and causes conflicts and termination of relations (Kim et al, 2006).

So, we can conclude that, SNS addiction affects individuals' family, social, personal and emotional life negatively and creates psychological symptoms such as loneliness, social and emotional maladjustment and distorted parent child relationship. Findings of the study reveals no difference in social as well as emotional adjustment between the addicted and non- addicted group, but difference exists in loneliness and parent child relationship, of course the direction of difference is negative in addicted group.

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