

## **Social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults: Associated familial factors**

### **Abstract**

**Aim:** This study investigates the association of familial factors with social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults. **Study design:** A survey research was employed. **Sample:** Present study was conducted in the year 2020-21 in Dharwad district of Karnataka State, India Total study sample of the study comprised of 160 students. Around 80 students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected. Social media addiction tool by Tutgan and Deniz (2015) was used to assess social media addiction and mental health inventory by Jagadish and Srivasthava (1983) was used to assess mental health status. **Results:** Results indicated that type of family had significant association and difference with social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults. No influence of socio economic status was observed on social media addiction and mental health of emerging adults.

### **Introduction**

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2020) defined emerging adulthood as a distinct developmental phase occurring roughly between the ages of 18 and 29. This period is characterized by significant exploration and self-discovery, as individual's transition from adolescence to full adulthood. Arnett's research emphasizes that emerging adulthood is marked by five key features: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and a sense of broad possibilities.

Experience of emerging adulthood varies across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. For example, according to Rachel A. Robillard and David C. Meyer (2021) have highlighted how globalization and economic shifts influence this developmental stage, leading to diverse trajectories in education, career, and personal relationships. Additionally, new studies emphasize the impact of technological advancements and changing social norms on the emerging adult experience, providing a more nuanced understanding of this complex life stage.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2000) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which an individual can effectively handle daily stressors, maintain positive relationships, and achieve personal and professional goals.”

Smart phones are providing millions of emerging adults throughout the world remarkable access to communication, entertainment, education, knowledge and are helpful in many other ways. According to the report Statista (2016) there were 238.70 million users of smart phones during the year 2015 which increased to 292 million during 2016. Smart phones are playing a big role in connecting people especially teenagers and emerging adults with internet. For the majority of emerging adults in the age group of 18-25 years social media usage has become the most popular daily activity. Teenagers and young adults are almost universally online. The internet population of young adults has remained the most likely to go online during the last decade.

The negative effects of social media are also come to the surface when used it excessively. Logging into others accounts, sharing of irrelevant photos and videos, hacking one's account and lack of privacy in online transactions are some of the biggest concern of internet users. Social media sites are also trying to provide encryption method to save the privacy of the users where the information is closed between the sender and the receiver (Holland and Tiggemann, 2016).

## **Methodology**

The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students both boys and girls studying in arts and science degree colleges. Eighty students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected thus making a final sample of 160 respondents. Inclusion criteria for the selection of sample included emerging adults in age group of 18-25 years attending degree colleges, those who were using android smart phones and having accounts in social media. Frequency, percentages and correlation was used for statistical analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Association between type of family and social media addiction among emerging adults**

Type of family	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	t-value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
<b>Nuclear</b>	12 (10.20)	38 (32.40)	67 (57.40)	117 (100.00)	<b>29.07**</b>	139.58 $\pm$ 28.32	<b>5.48 *</b>
<b>Joint</b>	21 (48.80)	10 (23.30)	12 (27.90)	43 (100.00)		108.18 $\pm$ 40.76	

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages

\*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 depicts association and difference between type of family and social media addiction of emerging adults. With respect to type of the family, 57.40 percent of the respondents who belonged to nuclear family had high level of addiction and 32.40 percent had medium level of social media addiction. About 48 percent of respondents who belonged to joint family were in low level of addiction and 27.90 percent were in high level of social media addiction. Significant association ( $\chi^2=29.07$ ) and difference ( $t= 5.48$ ) was observed between type of the family and social media addiction of emerging adults where, respondents who belonged to nuclear family had higher social media mean scores (139.58) compared to those who belonged to joint family (108.18). Respondents who belonged to nuclear family had higher social media scores compared to joint family. The reason might be that in nuclear family there will be no one to monitor the social media usage of emerging adults as both the parents are involved in job roles and household chores whereas in joint family there will be more number of members stay together and monitor their children which might have led to lessen social media addiction among emerging adults.

**Table 2: Association between SES and social media addiction among emerging adults**

SES of family	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	F-value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
<b>Poor</b>	0	2	2	4		131.55 $\pm$ 32.80	0.514 <sup>NS</sup>

	(0.00)	(50.00)	(50.00)	(100.00)	2.190 <sup>NS</sup>	
<b>Low middle</b>	5 (18.50)	9 (33.30)	13 (48.20)	27 (100.00)		128.29±36.57
<b>Upper middle</b>	14 (19.70)	20 (28.10)	37 (52.20)	71 (100.00)		130.74±36.53
<b>High</b>	14 (24.10)	17 (29.30)	27 (46.60)	58 (100.00)		151.5±28.10

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages NS - Non Significant

Table 2 depicts association and difference between socio economic status of the family and social media addiction of emerging adults. With regard to SES of the family 50.00 percent of the respondents who belonged to poor class were in high level of addiction and 50 percent were in medium level of social media addiction. Among the respondents who belonged to lower middle(48.20%), upper middle(52.20%) and high class (46.60%) were in high level of social media addiction and lower middle (33.30%), upper middle (28.10%) and high (29.30%) were in medium level of social media addiction. No significant association and difference was observed between SES of the family and social media addiction of emerging adults where, respondents belonging to upper middle and high class had high social media scores compared to lower middle and poor. The reason might be that those who belonged to upper middle and high socio economic status they can afford smart phones and have access to internet connectivity which might led to their higher usage levels and those who belonged to poor and lower middle because of their low income may not afford android mobiles which might have resulted in their lower addiction to social media. Results found contradictory with Zhong *et al.* (2020) who revealed that in families with lower socio economic status the students found to be high social media addicts.

**Table 3: Association between type of family and mental health of emerging adults**

Type of family	Mental health status				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean ± SD	t value
	Poor	Average	Good	Total			

<b>Nuclear</b>	65 (55.70)	36 (30.70)	16 (13.60)	117 (100.00)	0.292NS	152.41±20.12	<b>3.26**</b>
<b>Joint</b>	22 (51.10)	14 (32.50)	7 (16.40)	43 (100.00)		164.41±21.98	

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level    NS - Non Significant

Table 3 depicts association and difference between type of family and mental health of emerging adults. With respect to type of the family in respondents belonging to nuclear family 55.5 percent were in poor level of mental health and 30.7 percent were in average level of mental health same trend was observed in respondents belonging to joint family where, 51.1 percent were in poor level and 32.5 percent were in average level of mental health. No significant association was found between type of family and mental health of emerging adults. Significant difference ( $t= 3.26$ ) was observed between type of the family and mental health of emerging adults where, respondents who belonged to joint family had better mental health mean scores (164.41) compared to those who belonged to nuclear family (152.41)

**Table 4: Association between SES and mental health of emerging adults**

SES of family	Mental health status				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean ± SD	F value
	Poor	Average	Good	Total			
<b>Poor</b>	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (100.00)	4.951 <sup>NS</sup>	145.75±8.65	0.342 <sup>NS</sup>
<b>Low middle</b>	15 (55.60)	8 (29.60)	4 (14.80)	27 (100.00)		156.81±24.03	
<b>Upper middle</b>	36 (50.70)	26 (36.60)	9 (12.70)	71 (100.00)		156.05±21.07	
<b>High</b>	32 (55.10)	16 (27.50)	10 (17.40)	58 (100.00)		156.60±20.14	

Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentages    NS - Non Significant

Table 4 depicts association and difference between SES of the family and mental health of emerging adults. With regard to SES of the family all the respondents (100%) who belonged to poor class were in poor level of mental health. Among the respondents belonged to lower middle, upper middle and high class majority were in poor level of mental health with (55.5%), (50.7%), (55.1%) respectively and (29.6%), (36.6%), (27.5%) were in average level of mental health. No significant association and difference was observed between SES of the family and mental health status of emerging adults. In the present study type of the family and socio economic status had no significant influence on the mental health of emerging adults. A contradictory study revealed by Bagi and Kumar (2014) also revealed that a positive relationship between type of the family and mental health. Family cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance and caring in joint families was positively correlated with mental health of emerging adults. Tobias *et al.* (2010) revealed that, lower socioeconomic status of the family had a greater impact on the mental health status of their children.

## **Conclusion**

It is concluded from the present study that a significant influence was found between type of the family and social media addiction of emerging adults where individual belonging to nuclear family had high addiction. Significant difference was observed between type of family and mental health status of emerging adults where individual belonging to joint family had better mental health. Through open communications and promoting other productive activities, families can help emerging adults develop healthier relationships with social media and support their overall well-being.

## **References**

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