



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695  
ISSN (P): 2349-8242  
NAAS Rating: 5.23  
TPI 2022; SP-11(1): 302-305  
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[www.thepharmajournal.com](http://www.thepharmajournal.com)  
Received: 25-11-2021  
Accepted: 27-12-2021

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## Personal factors influencing social media addiction of emerging adults

**P Yamini and Dr. Lata Pujar**

### Abstract

Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. It allows users to have conversations, share information and create web content and also helps to keep in touch with friends and extended family members. A study on personal factors influencing social media addiction of emerging adults was taken up in Dharwad district of Karnataka state during the year 2020-21. One hundred and sixty students were selected from two arts stream and two science stream degree colleges of Dharwad city. Primary data was collected from the students about their social media usage. Chi square and t-test was used to know the association and difference between personal factors and social media addiction of emerging adults. Results found that Age has no significant association with social media addiction but a significant difference was observed between age and social media addiction of emerging adults. Gender and stream was significantly associated and differed with social media addiction of emerging adults where female gender and arts stream students had higher social media addiction. Number of apps used and time spent were significantly associated and differed with social media addiction of emerging adults where those who are using more number of apps and those who are spending more amount of time on social media had high addiction to social media.

**Keywords:** emerging adults, social media sites, factors influencing social media addiction

### Introduction

Emerging adulthood is a developmental stage that spans the late teens to the twenties, with a concentration on ages 18 to 29 years. It has been characterized as a period of exploration for most people as they examine possible life paths and gradually arrive at more stable roles in the process of making commitments in the domains of love, work, and worldviews. During this stage, individuals have the freedom to explore values and beliefs in their lives distinct from previously identified authority figures in childhood and are not confined to the limitations associated with adulthood. (Arnett, 2000) [1].

This is a distinct developmental period marked by significant changes in physical and social maturation, familial and societal expectations, and brain development, specifically with regard to emotion and behavioural control. These stages of life carry significant risk for the development of psychopathology and related functional impairments that adversely impact the achievement of important academic, occupational, and social milestones (Shannon, 2020) [9].

The term social media refers to a computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. It allows users to have conversations, share information and create web content. It allows individuals to keep in touch with friends and extended family. Some people will use various social media applications to network and find career opportunities, connect with people across the globe with like-minded interests, and share their own thoughts, feelings, and insights online (Dollarhide, 2021) [4].

There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. There are more than 4.5 billion social media users around the world. The largest social media networks include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. These all social media sites have some common features, such as active participation, information exchange, communication, entertainment and media sharing (Vannucci, 2017) [11]. In the world of mass communication, social media has its unique importance and has the power to influence many and this can be positive as well as negative.

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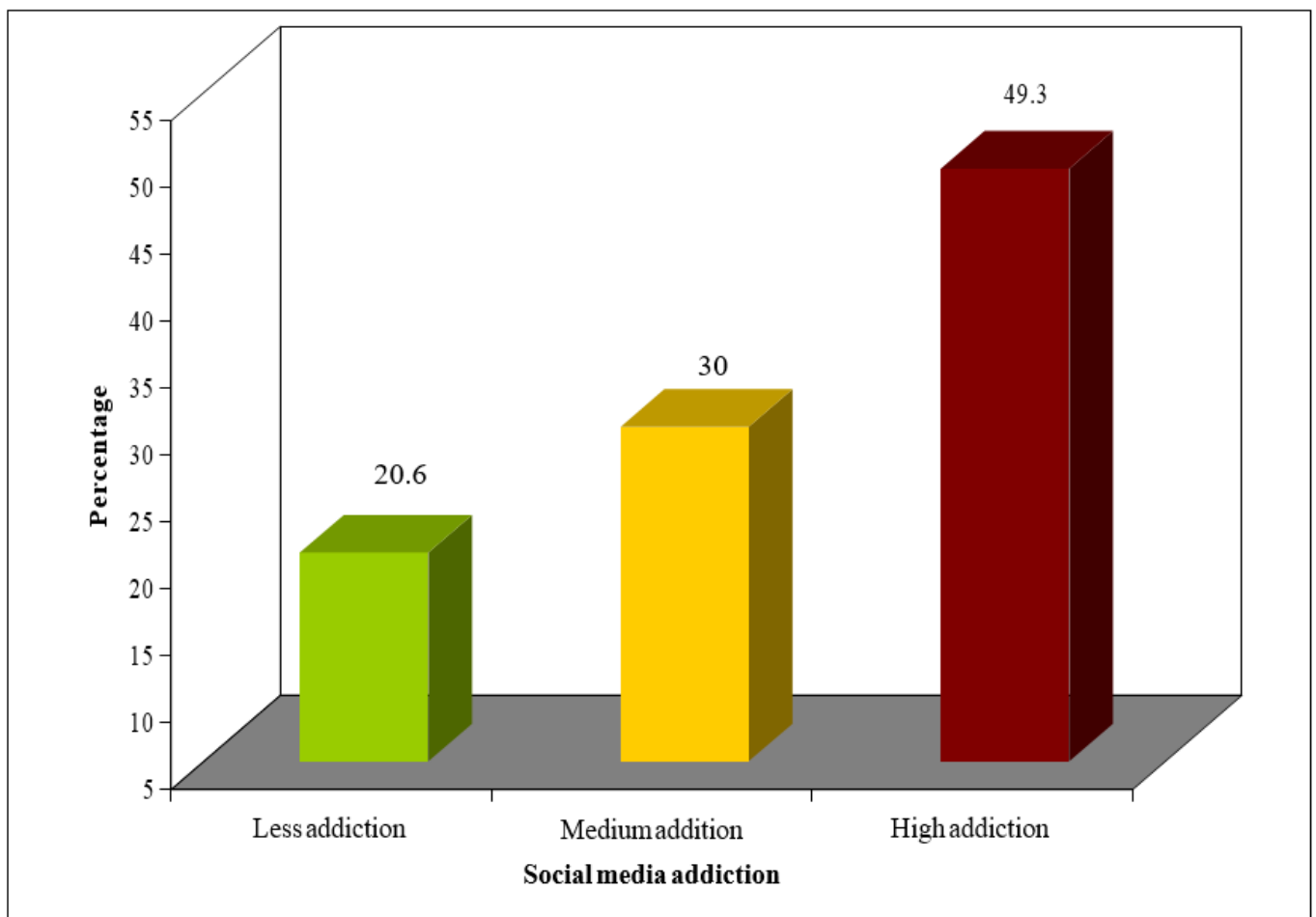
On a positive side, social media is acting as a source of education and transfer of information where the students can easily and freely have access to information and educated through online sessions. Many people access their jobs on some of the social media sites like LinkedIn, Face book and Twitter. 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 (Fardouly, 2016) [5].

**Material and Methods**

The study was conducted in Karnataka state during the year 2020-21. A survey research was employed to know the usage pattern of social media among emerging adults. The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students both boys and girls studying in arts and science degree colleges, Dharwad. Total sample comprised of 160 emerging adults,

out of which 80 students from two colleges of arts colleges studying I year and II year and 80 students from science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected randomly. A self-structured questionnaire and Social media addiction scale were used to collect information regarding social media usage and addiction of emerging adults. Self structured questionnaire tool measured different social media habits of emerging adults like different social media sites used, number of apps used, amount of time spent, GB used daily, purpose of using social media sites, psychosocial emotions experienced, negative perceptions about social media usage. Social media addiction scale was used to know the level of social media addiction of the respondents. The data collected from students through google form sent to student’s WhatsApp. The collected data were scored, tabulated and analysed using frequency and percentage

**Results and Discussion**



**Fig 1:** Overall distribution of respondents according to social media addiction

Fig. 1 presents social media addiction of emerging adults. It was observed that nearly half of the respondents fell under high category of social media addiction (49.30%), followed

by medium category of social media addiction (30.00%) and low category of social media addiction (20.60%).

**Table 1:** Association and difference between age and social media addiction among emerging adults

Age (years)	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	t- value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
18-19	14(17.50 )	23 (28.75)	43(53.65 )	80(100.00)	1.461NS	138.26 $\pm$ 33.64	2.62*
19-20	19(23.75 )	25(31.25 )	36(45.00)	80(100.00)		124.02 $\pm$ 34.86	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages.

\*Significant at 0.05 level, NS - Non Significant

A close perusal of table 1 depicts the association and difference between age and social media addiction of emerging adults. With regard to age group of emerging adults, in 18-19 years,

53.65 per cent belonged to high addiction and 28.75 per cent belonged to medium addiction. The same trend was observed in 19-20 years group where 45.00 per cent belonged to high level of addiction and 31.25 per cent belonged to medium level of social media addiction. There was no significant association between age and social media addiction but

significant difference ( $t= 2.62, p= 0.0045$ ) was observed between age and social media addiction of emerging adults where, 18-19 years had higher social media addiction compared to 19-20 years. The reason might be that social media became popular in current era with easy access to all age groups of people by providing opportunities to connect with people elsewhere in the world. So, regardless of age social media itself has changed the way we look at it while in earlier times it was confined to only limited age groups.

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

Gender	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	t- value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
Boys	21 (26.20)	29 (36.20)	30(37.60)	80(100.00)	9.107**	127.15 $\pm$ 34.96	2.25*
Girls	12(15.00)	19 (23.70)	49(61.30)	80(100.00)		139.40 $\pm$ 33.89	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages.  
\*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 depicts the association and difference between gender and social media addiction of emerging adults. Among boys 37.60 per cent belonged to high addiction and 36.20 per cent belonged to medium level of social media addiction. In girls 61.30 per cent belonged to high addiction and 23.70 per cent belonged to medium level of social media addiction. Significant association ( $\chi^2=9.107$ ) and difference ( $t= 2.25, p= 0.0046$ ) was observed between gender and social media addiction of emerging adults, where girls had higher social media addiction compared to boys. The reason could be that

now days there are many apps which make images and videos more beautiful with their filter and editing options and girls are using those apps more to make themselves more attractive and popular on these social media sites. Now a day's Instagram is taking over the other apps where girls are getting more likes and followers which is making them to use more social media than ever. Similarly Gross (2010) [6] and Burke (2010) [2] stated that girls on an average spend more time on social networking sites and use them more actively than boys.

**Table 3:** Association and difference between stream and social media addiction among emerging adults

Stream	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	t- value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
Arts	09(11.20)	14(17.50)	57(71.30)	80(100.00)	30.65**	143.96 $\pm$ 29.63	4.98*
Science	24(30.00)	34(42.50)	22(27.50)	80(100.00)		118.32 $\pm$ 35.24	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages.  
\*Significant at 0.05 level, \*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 depicts association and difference between stream and social media addiction of emerging adults. With regard to arts stream 71.30 per cent were in high addiction and 17.5 per cent were in medium level of social media addiction. In science stream 42.50 per cent were in medium level of addiction and 30.00 per cent were in low level of social media addiction. Significant association ( $\chi^2=30.65$ ) and difference ( $t= 4.98, p= 0.0032$ ) was observed between stream and social media

addiction of emerging adults, where arts stream students had higher social media addiction compared to science stream students. The reason could be that students of arts stream have comparatively freer time than science stream students who engage with practical and lab works and do not have much time to spend on social media sites which might have resulted in their less social media addiction.

**Table 4:** Association and difference between number of apps used and social media addiction among emerging adults

No. of apps used	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	F- value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
1-3	11(31.40)	13(37.10)	11(31.50)	35(100.00)	10.014**	127.88 $\pm$ 41.51ab	4.07**
4-6	12 (22.20)	18(33.30)	24(44.50)	54(100.00)		137.18 $\pm$ 42.22bac	
7-9	10 (14.00)	17(23.90)	44(62.10)	71(100.00)		150.66 $\pm$ 41.13cb	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages.  
\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 presents the influence of number of apps used on social media addiction of emerging adults. In the case of respondents who used 1-3 apps 37.10 per cent were in medium level and 31.50 per cent were in high level of social media addiction. In respondents who used 4-6 apps 44.50 per cent were in high addiction and 33.30 per cent were in medium addiction, where as in those who used 7-9 apps 62.10 per cent were in high addiction and 23.90 per cent were

in medium level of social media addiction. Significant association ( $\chi^2=10.014$ ) and difference ( $F= 4.07, p= 0.019$ ) was observed between number of apps used and social media addiction. Villanti *et al.* (2017) [12] stated that high mean number of social media sites was used regularly by young adults and this substantial use of multiple social media sites was found addictive among young adults. Coyle and Vaghn (2008) [3] also reported that majority of emerging adults are

having 2-5 accounts in different social media sites and they visit these sites daily to keep in touch with friends, family members.

**Table 5:** Association and difference between time spent and social media addiction among emerging adults

Time spent	Social media addiction				$\chi^2$ Value	Mean $\pm$ SD	F-value
	Less	Medium	High	Total			
30-60 min	2(28.50)	2(28.50)	3(43.00)	7(100.00)	20.631**	108.64 $\pm$ 29.66a	6.84*
1-2 hours	9(52.90)	7(41.10)	1(6.00)	17(100.00)		129.14 $\pm$ 41.59b	
3-4 hours	12 (21.40)	13 (23.20)	31(55.40)	56(100.00)		142.80 $\pm$ 41.13cd	
5-6 hours	10 (12.50)	26 (32.50)	44(55.00)	80(100.00)		152.71 $\pm$ 35.93dc	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentages.

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

Table 5 presents the influence of time spent on social media addiction of emerging adults. With regard to time spent on social media in respondents who are using for 30-60 min 43.00 per cent were in high level and an equal number (28.50%) were in medium level and low level of social media addiction. In those who are using 1-2 hours 52.90 per cent were in low level of social media addiction and 41.10 per cent were in medium addiction. In case of those who are using for 3-4 hours 55.40 per cent were in high addiction and 23.20 per cent were in medium level of addiction and in those who are using for more than 5-6 hours 55.00 per cent were in high addiction and 32.50 per cent were in medium level of social media addiction. Significant association ( $\chi^2=20.631$ ) and difference ( $F= 6.84$ ,  $p= 0.001$ ) was observed between time spent and social media of emerging adults. Manjunath (2013)<sup>[8]</sup> stated that students who are who are using more number of social media apps and who are spending more number of hours on these social media sites are found to be social media addicts. Subramanyam *et al.* (2008)<sup>[10]</sup>, Maekwei and Appiah (2016)<sup>[7]</sup> also reported that majority of emerging adults are spending 1-4 hours per day on social media sites for reading notes, reading comments, playing games, browsing friends profiles and for writing comments on friends profiles.

## Conclusion

Social media usage is a new addiction for majority of emerging adults because they are using more number of apps and are spending significant amount of time on these sites. Different factors were influencing social media addiction of emerging adults. Gender and stream was significantly influencing social media addiction of emerging adults where in gender girls were and in stream arts stream students were more addicted to social media. Age has no significant influence on social media addiction. Number of apps used and time spent were significantly influencing social media addiction of emerging adults where those who were using more number of apps and those who are spending more time on social media had more addiction to social media.

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