RESEARCH ARTICLE

EMOTIONAL MATURITY OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK SITES USERS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Online social network sites use has been emerged as a most powerful tool for communication and exchange of information all over the world. More recently the Wats app, Twitter, Face book, Instagram apps have provoked a revolution and unlocked a new dimension in the field of communication and technology; this ongoing digital revolution has touched and turned almost every sphere of life of its users whether its physical, social, emotional, moral or ethical. For Online social network users it is the need of hour to be emotionally mature to manage and monitor their own emotions, to assess the emotional state of others, to deal with the situations accordingly and purposefully. Quite often it has been observed that young online social network users get emotionally involved in this virtual world and act in that emotional flow which sometimes results in an emotional trauma leaving its impression for long. The purpose of this study was to investigate about the emotional maturity of online social network users and to find out that is there any significant impact of online social network use on Emotional maturity. Findings revealed that the young online social network sites users are not emotionally mature. Results showed that there is significant impact of online social network sites use on the independence and total emotional maturity. Young adolescents who use more online social network sites are not emotionally stable in comparison to who use less online social network sites. The implications of the study are discussed in light of the adverse effects of using online social network sites in India.

INTRODUCTION

A social networking website is an online podium through which the users are allowed to create a public profile and network with other users on the website. It generally posses the user provided information as in their details, input a list of people with whom they share a connection and then allow the people on the list to confirm or deny the connection. Once the connections are established, the new user can search the networks of his associates to widen his connections. A social networking site may also be known as a social website or a social networking website.

Boyd & Ellison (2007) defines Social network as web based services that allows individual 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.

Through social network one can share their profile, interest, activities, photos and other background information along with their friends and SNSs also facilitates the establishment of groups through which many users can chat, share information, videos and photos amongst the group members. In India nearly 85% of internet users have SNSs account which made the India the 7th largest market for SNSs. Though it provides diverse application to attract people it has its own impact on the users. Michale (2007) opine that the encroachment of digital communication into our social lives can amplify feeling of isolation. He also describes twittering in the presence of others as "prescription for loneliness," resulting in human heart suffering from lack of authentic interaction and finally effects mental stability. Young adults are more prone to SNSs usage that compared to the aged people. With this context the present paper attempts to study the impact of SNSs usage among adolescent in their Emotional maturity. Since adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to young adult, which is associated with major changes – in their Physiology, psychology, Social and cognitive areas, which influences their life style such as interaction with their peer group, family members, significant others, eating habits, role confusion. In

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addition they also tend to have stress, confusion, fear and uncertainty as well as pressure to succeed and the ability to think about things in new way, influences their problem solving and decision making abilities. This is the stage wherein they keep exploring new things specially with electronic gadgets for the purpose of social networking due to same they may become addicted to those social network sites. Studies pertaining to adolescent's usage of SNSs have shown that they are highly vulnerable to the development of Compulsive internet use. A recent Dutch study conducted by Van den Eijnden *et al.* (2008) has revealed that instant online communication applications such as instant messaging, whats app and messenger generate a higher addictive potential than most other internet applications. Meerkerk *et al.* (2009) reported a serious symptoms of compulsive internet use such as continuation of internet use regardless of the purpose or yearning to stop or cut down; experiencing unpleasant emotions when internet use is impossible; using the internet to escape from negative feelings; internet use dominating one's cognitions and behaviours; and internet use resulting in conflict with others or in self-conflict.

Amanda *et al.* (2008) reported that almost 85% of adolescents aged 12 -17 connect at least occasionally in some form of electronic personal communication, which includes text messaging, sending email or instant messages, or posting comments on social networking sites, difference with regard to age group amongst the Usage of social network sites has also been found. Pfeil, Arjan & Zaphiris (2009) comparing 50 teenagers (aged 13-19 years) and the 50 old aged MySpace users (aged over 60 years) revealed that teenagers' friends' networks were larger and that their friends were more similar to themselves with regards to age. Brenner's study (1997) shows that 80% of nearly 600 sample revealed that at least five use related problems such as failure to manage time, missed sleep etc, even use of social network has influenced students, A study by Scherer's (1997) showed that 13% of respondents reported that internet use had interfered with either academic work, professional performance or social lives. In a study on the relationship among Problematic Internet use (PIU) Milani *et al.* (2009) assessed the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the cognitive strategies regularly used by adolescents to face daily problems, 98 adolescents ages 14 to 19 (M = 16.28 years) participated in the research. The tools used were the Internet Addiction Test (IAT), the Test of Interpersonal Relationships (TRI); and the Children's Coping Strategies Checklist (CCSC). Parents of the participants were administered the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). Of the participants, 36.7% showed signs of PIU. These adolescents use the Internet for many hours per week most utilize dysfunctional coping strategies and show worse interpersonal relations than peers who do not show signs of PIU. Studies have showed that the excessive use of online social networking sites may be problematic (e.g., Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Leung & Lee, 2012) as it tends to stimulate the establishment and maintenance of online, rather than offline, social networks. Hofmann, Vohs, & Baumeister, (2012) in a similar vein, excessive use of Twitter may have negative consequences for real life communication and is believed to activate the pleasure-seeking dopamine system, that offers immediate gratification when using applications such as Twitter.

Few researches have indicated that online addiction may be related to neuroticism, anxiety, and sensation seeking (Mehroof & Griffiths, 2010). research findings also revealed that adolescent Internet addicts score significantly lower on extraversion compared to non-addicted adolescents (Huang *et al.*, 2010), have low emotional stability, low extraversion, and low agreeableness (van der Aa *et al.*, 2009). In opposing to above, there is also certain research studies such as Morahan-Martin & Schumaker, (2003) indicated positive side of Internet use like study found that lonely Internet users were more likely than the non-lonely to seek emotional support online, find more satisfaction with online opposed to offline friends. Park (2010) found that SNSs use among college students had positive correlation with face-to-face interaction with friends and acquaintances, and Sheldon (2008) found that college students who were more willing to communicate offline had more online friendships.

Thus the above contradictory research findings indicates the need of more research in terms of the use of online Social network sites on emotional maturity among adolescents, Hence this study aimed at examining whether more online social network sites use influence on the emotional maturity among adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

To study whether the use of social network sites has the effect on Emotional Maturity among the adolescents.

Hypothesis

Use of social networking sites will not have influence on Emotional Maturity among the adolescents

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was employed. For the present study the total participants of 400 college students from various colleges of Bangalore city were selected. The cluster random sampling technique was adopted for the study and the assigned participants in to two groups based on the scores of Social network sites scale which included (N=200) High SNSs users and (N=200) Low SNSs users.

Inclusion criteria

- Adolescents in the age group of 16 to 20.
- Those who are regularly going to college and using social network sites were included.
- Literate adolescents from urban region are taken for the study.

Exclusion criteria

- Illiterates and rural adolescents.
- Adolescents below age 16 are excluded for the present study.

Measures

•*Information Schedule.* This schedule was intend to provide detailed information regarding age, gender, class, place of birth, order of birth, and scholastic records which was

collected with the help of class teachers and other demographic details.

•*Social network site scale (2015).* Designed by the researcher by consulting Research guide which consists of 31 items. Each item has to be rated on 5-point scale on the continuum of always with score of 5, often score of 4, sometimes with the score of 3, rarely with the score of 2 and never with 1. This test consists of 5 different sub-areas namely Usage, Health Issues, Psychological impact and other interpersonal relationships. The minimum scores of a subject on this scale will be 31 and the maximum possible scores will be 155. High score indicates that the respondent is high user and low score indicate low user. The test posses the Cronback's Alpha reliability of 0.87

•*Emotional maturity scale (1999).* EMS by Dr. Yashvir singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava Measures emotional maturity, It contained 48 items under the five categories such as emotional unstability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personal disintegration, and lack of independence. It is a self report measure of five point rating with options namely very much, much, undecided, probably, and never weighted on 5, 4,3,2,1 on the scale points. The scale was standardized for college students and the norms were established as- (50-80)-Extremely stable, (81-88)-Moderately stable, (89-106)-Unstable, and (107-240)-Extremely unstable.

Procedure

The Information schedule, SNSs scale and Emotional Maturity Scale was administered as group test on the sample selected. At the outset it was explained to the subject that these inventories were normally used scale on general population for the purpose of understanding their level of SNSs usage and how they view themselves. They were also assured with confidentiality. The nature of the inventories was explained to the subjects. Items pertaining to difficulty in comprehending were explained and doubts were clarified, on an average 25 to 30 minutes was taken for completing both the inventories.

Analysis of Results and Discussion

Keeping in view the objectives of the present study, in order to find out the significant differences in emotional maturity between low social network users and high social network users among adolescents, an independent sample t test was calculated. The obtained results have been shown in the following table. The analysis of results and the hypothesis testing of emotional maturity scores were been presented respectively in the following section.

Table 1. The Mean, SD and t ratio on scores of Emotional maturity scale of low and high social network users among adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	P
High SNS Users	200	117.87	22.573	1.596	4.77	0.001
Low SNS Users	200	107.04	22.769	1.610		
Total	400					

The Table 1 shows the mean, Standard deviation and t ratio of two groups on Emotional maturity scores of low and high social network users among adolescents. As the table shows, adolescents who were found to be using high amount of social network sites reported a lower level of emotional maturity (*M*=117.87, *SD*=22.57) compared to the group who found to be using a lower amount of social network sites (*M*=107.04, *SD*=22.76), There was a significant effect for use of social network sites on the emotional maturity, $t (398) = 4.77, p < .001$, with the higher amount of social network sites users group exhibited a higher scores on emotional maturity than the group using lower amount of social network sites group. Hence the hypothesis of this study "Use of social networking sites will not have influence on Emotional Maturity among the adolescents" is not accepted.

DISCUSSION

While social networking undoubtedly plays a vital role in broadening social connections and learning technical skills, its risks cannot be overlooked. The finding of the study showed that young online social networking sites users are less emotionally matured comparing to those who use online social networking sites less. This finding is supported by the several studies conducted by Kuss & Griffiths (2011), Leung & Lee (2012), Meerkerk *et al*., (2009), Van den Eijnden *et al*., (2008), Hofmann, Vohs, & Baumeister, (2012), and Huang *et al*., (2010). In contrast to the findings of the present study Morahan-Martin & Schumaker, (2003) found that lonely internet users were more likely than the non-lonely to seek emotional support online, find more satisfaction with online opposed to offline friends and Park (2010) found that SNSs use among college students had positive correlation with face-to-face interaction with friends and acquaintances, and Sheldon (2008) found that college students who were more willing to communicate offline had more online friendships. Which asserts that online social network sites use have positive consequences on self expression and their emotional regulation. Whereas, these findings are not representing the overall emotional maturity, these studies focused mainly on communication and self-disclosure rather than over all emotional maturity. The possible explanations for the findings of the present study is the lack or difficulty in self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure makes adolescents vulnerable to such evils as Face book depression, sexting, and cyber bullying, which are realistic threats. Other problems such as social network-induced obesity, Internet addiction and sleep deprivation are issues that continue to be under intense scrutiny for the contradictory results that have been obtained in various studies. One of the major negative consequences of depending on social networking sites such as using face book is Face book depression, It is defined as emotional disturbance that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, is now a very real malady. Recent studies have shown that comparisons are the main cause of Face book depression; the study showed that down-comparison (comparing with inferiors) was just as likely to cause depression as up-comparison (comparing with people better than oneself). However, there are contradictory reports as well. Given that our brains are wired to connect, it seems logical to expect that social networks, by enabling sharing, could cause a self-reinforcing sense of psychological dissatisfaction. Other risks of extensive social networking among youth are loss of privacy, sharing too much information, and disconnect from reality. The digital footprint is a permanent trail that users of social media, indeed of the Internet itself, leave the moment they sign into any service. The digital footprint, by its permanence, can have serious repercussions in future, in both professional and personal areas

of life. It is important to know that every activity online - posts on social media accounts, comments left on various sites, tweets, retweets and +1s through years can contribute to the digital footprint. Another serious risk is the amount of information shared on social network sites. What is more worrying is the fact that 44 percent of them believed that the information they posted on sites like Facebook, LinkedIn or MySpace were being used against them.

Adolescence is the time to spread wings and take the tentative first flight out into the world, and parents and caregivers must be part of the process. In the domain of social networking, this entails parents becoming educated about the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking sites and themselves joining social network sites, not to hover, but to be aware of the activities of their teenage wards. It is essential that parents are aware of and monitor privacy settings and online profiles of their wards. Open discussions about social network protocols and etiquettes would go a long way in establishing global digital citizenship and healthy behaviour.

Conclusion

More online social network site users are emotionally less matured compared to those who use less online social network sites.

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