

## **Social media usage and emotional maturity among adolescents**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study is a survey research conducted to understand the relationship between social media usage and emotional maturity among adolescents. Social media is an online platform that people use to build social relation namely Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc. India has 367.48 million internet subscribers in September 2016. (The Hindu, 27 March, 2017). The need for study is to find out whether the social media has positive or negative impact on emotional maturity among adolescents. Emotional maturity is a measure of Emotional stability, Emotional progression, Social adjustment, Personality integration and Independence (Singh, 1999). An emotionally mature person is high on above mentioned dimensions. The current study was conducted on 50 boys and 50 girls (N=100) whose age range between 11 years to 19 years. The tools used in the study is Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) by Singh and Bharagava (1999) and a self constructed tool as a measure for emotional maturity and social media usage, respectively. Convenience sampling was adopted for the study. On data analysis, the results indicate that the sample (N=100) was interpreted as extremely emotionally immature in EMS. In the sample, adolescent girls as well as boys were emotionally stable in the dimensions of Emotional stability, Emotional progression, Personality integration and Independence and emotionally unstable in Social adjustment dimension. No significant gender difference among adolescents was found. The most used social media application is WhatsApp, majority of the population spent at least four hours a day using social media, majority of the sample does not get dejected and the most interacted social group is family.

**Key Words :** Social media usage, Emotional maturity, Emotional stability, Emotional progression, Personality integration, Independence, Adolescents

### **INTRODUCTION**

We as humans experience emotions at every moment of our life and we tend to interact with others to share and amplify these emotions. Now, social media has become a virtual platform for interacting with others and its constant usage has made it essential to become emotionally mature to deal with such unprecedented interactions.

Ocansey *et al.* (2016) said that social media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic texts, graphics, moving images and sound into a structured computerized

(digital) environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes.

Emotion refers to feelings and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological state and range of propensities to act (Goleman, 1995). Emotional Maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health both intra psychically and intra personally. (Smitson, 1974).

Kaplan and Baron (1986) believe that emotional maturity is effective on person's enjoyment of the features such as the ability to withstand a delay in meeting needs, ability to tolerate the sense of deprivation and frustration, ability to delay or revise their expectations in terms of conditions and believing in the long-term planning.

Adolescence is often characterized as a time of emotional turbulence, hormonal changes and parental rebellion (Smetana, 2011). Adolescence is the time when youth establish a strong sense of group affiliation that has a significant implication for their developing principle of fairness, justice and equality (Killen, 2011).

The relationship between the need for personal identity, the need for close personal connection and strong group memberships is fundamental for children entering adolescence (Crosnoe and Johnson, 2011).

#### **Review on literature :**

According to Sani *et al.* (2017), the rate of people's addiction to social networks has a reverse relationship with their emotional maturity. According to Ocansey (2016), youth spend more time in social media more to just relieve their boredom by chatting and other engagements than to use it for the betterment for life. According to a study by Arun Kumar (2016), there is no significant difference in emotional maturity of undergraduate students of University of Lucknow regarding gender and locality. Urban male and female also showed equal levels at emotional maturity but rural male and female showed significant difference at emotional maturity. According to Khurana (2015), The youth have determined their own boundaries and have set their own limits as to how and when to use social media irrespective of the positive and negative effects it imparts. According to Deshwal (2014), it is found that adolescent internet users in sub-urban were high in emotional maturity than compared to metropolitan city users. According to Shivani Arora (2014), spending too much time in social media is harmful both physically and mentally.

#### **Method of investigation :**

##### **Aim :**

To determine social media usage and emotional maturity among adolescents.

#### **Objectives and hypothesis :**

To measure the social media usage of adolescents based on four criteria :

- a) the most used social media
- b) the time spent on social media per day
- c) whether subjects feel dejected when people whom they chat with on a daily basis don't respond to their text within a day
- d) with whom interaction occurs on a regular basis.

To measure the Emotional Maturity among adolescents and its dimensions, namely

- a) Emotional Stability
- b) Emotional Progression

- c) Social Adjustment
- d) Personality Integration
- e) Independence

To find the relationship between social media usage and emotional maturity among adolescents.

To study the gender differences on emotional maturity among adolescents.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample and sampling method :

Survey research method was adopted. The ages of the sample size range between 11 to 19 years taken from the cities of Chennai, Bengaluru and Vellore. The sample was collected from fifty adolescent boys and girls, giving the sample size as hundred. Convenience sampling was used.

### Tools used :

To measure emotional maturity, Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) by Singh and Bhargava (1990) is used. The scale consists of 48 items and is based on five major areas of emotional maturity which are emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence.

1) Emotional stability means characteristics of person that does not allow him to react excessively or given to swings in moods or marked changes in Emotional stability in any emotive situation.

2) Emotional progression is the characteristic of person that means feeling of adequate advancement and growing vitality of emotions in relation to the environment to ensure positive thinking imbued with righteousness and contentment.

3) Social adjustment refers to process of interaction between the needs of person and demands of the social environment, that promotes desired relationship.

4) Personality Integration is the process of firmly unifying the diverse elements of an individual's motives and dynamic tendencies.

5) Independence is the capacity of a person's attitudinal tendency to be self-reliant or of resistance to control by others, where he can take his decisions by his own judgment based on facts by utilizing his intellectual and creative potentialities.

High score on EMS indicate emotional immaturity and low score on EMS indicates emotional maturity. The reliability of the scale is 0.75. The validity of the scale is 0.64. 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.

| Interpretation for Overall Emotional Maturity in EMS |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Score                                                | Interpretation (Level of Maturity) |
| 50-80                                                | Extremely Emotionally Mature       |
| 81-88                                                | Moderately Emotionally Mature      |
| 89-106                                               | Moderately Emotionally Immature    |
| 107-240                                              | Extremely Emotionally Immature     |

### Self constructed tool to measure social media usage :

The self constructed tool measuring social media usage has four questions which measure the most commonly used social media, time spent using social media, dejection due to duration of

| Interpretation for dimensions of EMS |                                                                                                                            |       |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Score                                | Interpretation for dimensions of Emotional stability, Emotional progression, Social adjustment and personality integration | Score | Interpretation for independence (Level of Maturity) |
| 1-12                                 | Extremely Emotionally Stable                                                                                               | 1-10  | Extremely Emotionally Stable                        |
| 13-25                                | Emotionally Stable                                                                                                         | 11-20 | Moderately Emotionally Stable                       |
| 26-37                                | Emotionally Unstable                                                                                                       | 21-30 | Moderately Emotionally Unstable                     |
| 38-50                                | Extremely Emotionally Unstable                                                                                             | 31-40 | Extremely Emotionally Unstable                      |

response and the most frequently interacted social group.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1, it is inferred that the most used social media is Whatsapp, followed by instagram, facebook, twitter, pintrest, snapchat, hike and others, respectively. 33 per cent of the subjects use social media for 0-2 hours, 32 per cent use for 2-4 house, 24 per cent use for 4-6 hours and 11 per cent for 6 hours and above. 56 per cent of the subjects didn't get dejected when they didn't get a reply within a day and only 44 per cent got dejected. The social group most interacted with using social media is family followed by friends, relatives, acquaintance and strangers.

| Table 1 : Frequency distribution of measures social media usage                                                |                                                  |                |              |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Scoring                                                                                                        |                                                  | N=100<br>Total | N=50<br>Boys | N=50<br>Girls |
| What are the social media do you use ?                                                                         | Instagram                                        | 85             | 44           | 41            |
|                                                                                                                | Facebook                                         | 59             | 36           | 23            |
|                                                                                                                | Whats App                                        | 92             | 47           | 45            |
|                                                                                                                | Snapchat                                         | 12             | 7            | 5             |
|                                                                                                                | Pintrest                                         | 16             | 5            | 11            |
|                                                                                                                | Hike                                             | 11             | 6            | 5             |
|                                                                                                                | Twitter                                          | 17             | 13           | 4             |
|                                                                                                                | Others (Youtube, Quora, Deverant, Chatkik etc.,) | 4              | 3            | 1             |
|                                                                                                                |                                                  |                |              |               |
| How many hours do you spend your time on social media per day?                                                 | 0 - 2 Hours                                      | 32             | 14           | 18            |
|                                                                                                                | 2 - 4 Hours                                      | 33             | 18           | 15            |
|                                                                                                                | 4 - 6 Hours                                      | 24             | 14           | 10            |
|                                                                                                                | 6 Hours Above                                    | 11             | 4            | 7             |
| Do you feel dejected when people whom you chat with on a daily basis, don't respond to your text within a day? | Yes                                              | 44             | 22           | 22            |
|                                                                                                                | No                                               | 56             | 28           | 28            |
| To whom do you talk with on a regular basis using social media?                                                | Family                                           | 96             | 49           | 47            |
|                                                                                                                | Friends                                          | 34             | 14           | 20            |
|                                                                                                                | Relatives                                        | 17             | 9            | 8             |
|                                                                                                                | Aquaintances                                     | 6              | 4            | 2             |
|                                                                                                                | Strangers                                        | 3              | 2            | 1             |

From Table 2, it is inferred that the overall emotional maturity of the sample was extremely emotionally immature. The overall population were emotionally stable in the dimensions of emotional

stability, emotional progression, social adjustment and independence and emotionally unstable in personality integration dimension. A study conducted by Clarke-Pearson and O’Keeffe (2011, p. 800), suggest that children and adolescents on social media sites have “a limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure.” Instant gratification has become the norm of the day and they are unable to understand the restraint that real world requires them to have, putting them at a disadvantage in day-to-day situations.

| Table 2 : Mean, Standard Deviation and levels of significance of emotional maturity and its dimensions |                        |       |               |        |                |                                |                    |         |         |                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|---------------|--------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| Dimensions                                                                                             | Number of subjects (N) |       | Mean for N=50 |        | Mean for N=100 | Interpretation                 | Standard deviation | t-value | p-value | Level of significance |
|                                                                                                        | Boys                   | Girls | Boys          | Girls  |                |                                |                    |         |         |                       |
| Emotional stability                                                                                    | 50                     | 50    | 22.92         | 25.04  | 23.98          | Emotionally stable             | 0.09               | 1.70    | 0.09    | 0.05*                 |
| Emotional Progression                                                                                  |                        |       | 24.38         | 23.48  | 23.93          | Emotionally stable             | 0.45               | 0.76    | 0.45    |                       |
| Social adjustment                                                                                      |                        |       | 26.00         | 26.76  | 26.36          | Emotionally unstable           | 0.60               | 0.50    | 0.60    |                       |
| Personality integration                                                                                |                        |       | 20.45         | 21.56  | 21.01          | Emotionally stable             | 0.29               | 0.95    | 0.29    |                       |
| Independence                                                                                           |                        |       | 18.46         | 18.91  | 18.66          | Emotionally stable             | 0.36               | 0.46    | 0.36    |                       |
| Total/ Averages                                                                                        | 100                    |       | 111.24        | 116.52 | 113.88         | Extremely Emotionally Immature | 67.18              | 1.16    | 0.25    |                       |

\* the t-value (t) for this study with level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) at 0.05 is  $t < 1.9845$ .

Girls had a higher emotional maturity score in the dimensions of emotional stability, social adjustment, personality integration and independence as well as in the overall emotional maturity. Boys had higher maturity score in dimension of emotional progression. However, the data analysis through t-test showed that there was no significant difference in emotional maturity between boys and girls with  $\alpha=0.05$  and  $t < 1.9845$ , thereby accepting null hypothesis. Findings of the research conducted by Noorani *et al.* (2014) indicated that there was no difference between general emotional maturity and its subscales in men and women. This may be due to small population used in our study and the above mentioned one.

From Table 3, it is inferred that WhatsApp is the most used application followed by Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat, Hike and others. The most used social media application was WhatsApp and its users were extremely emotionally immature. A recent Dutch study conducted by Van den Eijnden *et al.* (2008) has revealed that instant online communication applications such as instant messaging, WhatsApp and Messenger generate a higher addictive potential than most other internet applications.

The maximum number of subjects spent at least two to four hours on social media and were extremely emotionally immature. Subjects using social media from 0-2 hours and 6 hours above all are extremely emotionally immature. Michale (2007) opine that the encroachment of digital communication into our social lives can amplify feeling of isolation.

Most of the subjects didn’t get dejected when they didn’t get a reply within a day. Adolescent population seeks out to feel a sense of belonging to the world and having the freedom and flexibility of discovering it on their own (Boyd, 2015, p.10). This is because they themselves were unable to

**Table 3 : Mean emotional maturity in different social media usage criteria**

| Scoring                                                                                                        |                                                  | N=100<br>Total | Mean Emotional<br>Maturity Score | Interpretation                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| What are the social media do you use ?                                                                         | Instagram                                        | 85             | 115.58                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Facebook                                         | 59             | 109.74                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Whats App                                        | 92             | 114.54                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Snapchat                                         | 12             | 111.75                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Pintrest                                         | 16             | 108.9                            | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Hike                                             | 11             | 115.42                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Twitter                                          | 17             | 115.58                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Others (Youtube, Quora, Deverant, Chatkik etc.,) | 4              | 111.75                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
| How many hours do you spend your time on social media per day?                                                 | 0 - 2 Hours                                      | 32             | 110.18                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | 2 - 4 Hours                                      | 33             | 114.54                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | 4 - 6 Hours                                      | 24             | 118.40                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | 6 Hours Above                                    | 11             | 126.64                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
| Do you feel dejected when people whom you chat with on a daily basis, don't respond to your text within a day? | Yes                                              | 44             | 95.29                            | Moderately Emotionally Immature |
|                                                                                                                | No                                               | 56             | 121.76                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
| To whom do you talk with on a regular basis using social media?                                                | Family                                           | 96             | 108.05                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Friends                                          | 34             | 113.41                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Relatives                                        | 17             | 112.04                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Aquaintances                                     | 6              | 109.25                           | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |
|                                                                                                                | Strangers                                        | 3              | 110                              | Extremely Emotionally Immature  |

reply in certain situations, making them more forgiving.

The most talked with group was family. In a study conducted by Singh *et al.* (2014) Adolescents from joint family were significantly better on emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence components of emotional maturity scale and eventually on emotional maturity than those from nuclear family. Since the sample was taken from urban and semi urban residents, most of the families were nuclear. Maybe due to this factor they were extreme emotional immature.

### Conclusion :

The most used social media application is WhatsApp, majority of the population spent at least four hours a day in social media, majority of the sample does not get dejected and the most talked to social group is family.

The sample is extremely emotionally immature.

Social media users according to all four criteria are emotionally immature.

There is no significant gender differences in emotional maturity.

### Implication of study :

This study could be used for analyzing the social behavioural patterns of adolescents in the virtual world. The study could help adolescents to modify their usage of social media thereby

developing their emotional maturity.

#### **Future Research :**

The study could be done with a larger population base to make better generalisations and age distribution could be more even. The sample population could be demographically specific. A standardised test could be used to measure social media usage. A correlation test could be done to determine the valence of social media usage and emotional maturity.

#### **Appendix-A :**

1. What are the social media do you use?  
(a) Instagram (b) Facebook (c) WhatsApp (d) Hike (e) Twitter (f) Others
2. How many hours do you spend your time on social media per day?  
(a) 0-2 hrs (b) 2-4 hrs (c) 4-6 hrs (d) More than 6 hrs
3. Do you feel dejected when people whom you chat with on a daily basis, don't respond to your text within a day?  
(a) Yes (b) No
4. To whom do you talk with on a regular basis using social media? (can use more than option)  
(a) Friends (b) Family (c) Relatives (d) Strangers (e) Acquaintances

#### **Appendix- B :**

##### **Instructions:**

This is a form which we have made to collect information that is useful for writing our research paper on relationship between Social Media and Emotional Maturity of the users. This form has 6 sections in all, Sections I, A, B, C, D and E. Section I of this form measures the social media usage of a person and they questions relate to your preference and experiences that you face while using social media. Sections A, B, C, D and E measure the different dimensions of your Emotional Maturity. In these are given 48 statements about yourself. Five possible modes of responses are provided. Read each statement carefully and mark in any one of the five alternative response modes to indicate your level of agreement with the particular content of the statements. Do not think too much while answering, whatever you feel may indicate. Your responses will be kept confidential.

1. Are you involved in any mental botheration?
2. Do you get frightened about the upcoming situations?
3. Do you stop in the middle of any work before reaching the goal?
4. Do you take the help of other person to complete your personal work?
5. Is there any difference between your desires and objectives?
6. Do you feel within yourself that you are a short-tempered person?
7. Do you feel that you are very stubborn?
8. Do you feel jealous of other people?
9. Do you get wild due to anger?
10. Do you get lost in imaginations and day dreams?
11. If you fail to achieve your goal, do you feel inferior?
12. Do you experience a sense of discomfort and lack of peace of mind?
13. Do you tease against others?

14. Do you try to put the blame on the others for your lapses?
15. When you do not agree with others, do you start quarrelling with them?
16. Do you feel yourself as exhausted?
17. Is your behaviour more aggressive than your friends and others?
18. Do you get lost in the world of imaginations?
19. Do you feel that you are self-centred?
20. Do you feel that you are dissatisfied with yourself?
21. Do you have a strained companionship with your friends?
22. Do you hate others?
23. Do you praise yourself?
24. Do you avoid joining in social gatherings?
25. Do you spend much time for your time for your own sake?
26. Do you lie?
27. Do you bluff?
28. Do you like very much to be alone?
29. Are you proud by nature?
30. Do you shrink from work?
31. Even though you know some work, do you pretend as if you don't know it?
32. Even though you don't know about some work, do you pose as if you know it?
33. Having known you are at fault, instead of accepting it, do you try to establish that you are right?
34. Do you know suffer from any kind of fear?
35. Do you lose your mental balance?
36. Are you in the habit of stealing of anything?
37. Do you indulge freely without bothering about moral codes of conduct?
38. Are you pessimistic towards life?
39. Do you have a weak will? ( self will or determination )?
40. Are you intolerant about the views of others?

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