



FACEBOOK ADDICTION, LONELINESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to assess the level of facebook addiction, loneliness and psychological well-being among college students. The data was collected from 60 students (30 males and 30 females) using Facebook Addiction Scale by Bergen, UCLA Loneliness scale by Russel, Peplau and Psychological Well-being scale by Ryff. The obtained data was organized for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics was computed along with 't' and Pearson's product moment correlation. The 't' test results revealed that there is no significant gender difference on loneliness and psychological well-being, but a significant gender difference on facebook addiction was seen among college students; with males having greater scores than females. The correlation co-efficient revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between Facebook addiction and well-being, between facebook addiction and loneliness and between loneliness and well-being. Further, a linear Regression analysis was done to check the extent of influence of facebook addiction on psychological well-being. The result revealed that 52.5% of facebook usage contributed to lowered psychological well-being among college students.

KEYWORDS

Facebook addiction, Loneliness, Psychological well-being, College Students.

Social media is a platform for people to express their views on topics of importance, connect with family, friends and society at large. Various social networking sites have been used as a medium to share pictures, videos, status messages, and memes, trolls on current issues. Of late, Social media usage has attracted users from early childhood to late adulthood. The usage slowly moves on to become an addiction with people spending large amounts of time on social media, thereby affecting various areas of functioning such as academic, social and occupational lives. Facebook, founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg is the most popular social networking site that has attracted users across the globe.

Facebook Addiction is defined as excessive, compulsive usage of the site which like other behavioral addictions involves salience, loss of control, social insecurity, fear of missing out and feelings others have better lives than oneself. (Frederick Muench, to Psychiatry Advisor) Loneliness is defined as a state of solitude or being alone (Cambridge English Dictionary). It is a negative feeling where one feels isolated, alone and disconnected from others.

Psychological well-being (PWB) is quite similar to positive mental states such as happiness or satisfaction. It is subjective as it refers to the extent to which a person feels positive emotions and happiness (Diener,2000). PWB is hedonic (subjective to one) and Eudaimonic (refers to purposeful aspect of PWB).

Need for the study: In the technology driven time of the 21st Century, networking with people has become rampant. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, Snapchat etc are being used to stay connected with people across the globe. Facebook is one of the most popular sites (with 2 billion users as of June 30th 2017. Source: Mark Zuckerberg's post on Fb) being used by people of all ages, a large chunk of users being college students. The usage has slowly moved to a state of addiction with people instantly sharing messages, status updates, photos and videos. With an increase in usage, people tend to isolate themselves from the real world and live in virtual reality, leading to loneliness. A reduced sense of well-being prevails when one receives less likes/comments on updates. In this regard, the present study focuses on the level of addiction, loneliness and psychological well-being among college students.

Review of Literature:

Ranaeiy, Taghavi et al (2015) studied the effect of loneliness on Social networking sites use and its related behaviors on 156 students from Shiraz university (Iran) using a survey on time spent on Social networking sites, "Internet Use Scale" and "Internet Behaviors Scale" (inspired by Morahan-Martin, 2003) as well as UCLA loneliness scale (Russel, 1996). 108 (69.2%) were female and 42 (26.9%) were male. Participant reported an average weekly use as 18.01 hours (S.D=20.38). The results indicated that there is no difference between lonely and non-lonely individuals in reasons for using and spending time on

social networking sites. Social behavior of lonely individuals shows a significant difference which is consistently enhanced online. Lonely people also significantly develop internet-related problems in their daily functioning, including interference with real life socializing.

Shettar, Karkal. et al (2017) studied Facebook addiction and loneliness in the post-graduate students of a university in Southern India (Yenepoya University). The study involved a cross-sectional design on 100 post-graduate students using Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale and UCLA Loneliness scale. Pearson's bivariate correlation was done to see the relationship between the severity of Facebook addiction and the experience of loneliness. More than 26% of the population had facebook addiction and 33% had a possibility of FB addiction. There was a significant positive correlation between severity of addiction and the extent of experience of loneliness.

Method:

Problem: To assess Facebook addiction, Loneliness and Psychological well-being among college students using Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale, UCLA Loneliness scale and Ryff's Psychological well-being scale.

Hypotheses:

- There is no significant gender difference on Facebook Addiction among College students.
- There is no significant gender difference on Loneliness among College students.
- There is no significant gender difference on Psychological well-being among college students.
- There is no significant relationship between Facebook addiction and Loneliness among college students.
- There is no significant relationship between Facebook addiction and Psychological well-being among college students.
- There is no relationship between Loneliness and Psychological well-being among college students.

Research Design: The present study examined the relationship between Facebook addiction, loneliness and psychological well-being among college students. Hence, it used a Correlational research design.

Variables: Independent: Gender, Facebook Addiction and Loneliness; **Dependent:** PWB.

Sample: The participants for the study were male and female college students aged between 18-21 years. The sample size of 60 (30 Males and 30 Females) was selected from urban population using convenient sampling.

Tools:

The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) is a pool of 18 items,

three reflecting each of the 6 core elements of addiction (Salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse). It is a self-report measure on which a respondent marks options such as Very rarely, rarely, sometimes, often and very often. The items are scored as 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. High scores are an indication of high addiction. The test has a coefficient alpha of 0.83 and the 3 week test re-test reliability was 0.82.

UCLA Loneliness Scale: Developed by Russell.D, Peplau et al(1978), the scale has 20-items designed to measure one's subjective feelings of loneliness and feelings of social isolation. Respondents rate each item as Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never. The items are scored as 3,2,1,0 respectively. The test has a co-efficient alpha ranging from 0.89 to 0.94 and a 1 year test re-test reliability of 0.73.

Ryff's Psychological Well-being scale: This is a 42 item measure of well-being that is answered on a 6-point rating ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree(1-6). 20 negatively phrased items are reverse scored (if the score is 6, it becomes 1, 2 is 5 and so on...)The scale has 6 dimensions- Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Personal growth, Positive relations, Purpose in life and Self-acceptance.

Procedure: In order to collect data for the research, college students were contacted personally to get their consent to participate in the study. With their consent, the purpose of the study was briefed and rapport was established. Their biographical information was obtained in the sheet prepared for the purpose which contained their age, course being pursued. Ethical issues like confidentiality of information and convenience of subjects were strictly followed for the collection of data. Participants were informed of the choice to withdraw themselves from the research at any point during the responding period. Subsequently, the Facebook addiction scale, UCLA loneliness scale and Ryff's PWB scale were administered as per standard directions. After the participants finished responding, the questionnaires were collected back and subjects were thanked for their participation and cooperation.

Results and Discussion:

The obtained data was organized and classified according to the objectives and hypotheses made in the research study. Normality tests revealed that the data was normally distributed. The analysis of data was made by applying a't' test to find out if there was significant gender difference in Facebook addiction, loneliness and PWB among college students. The data was further analyzed by computing correlation coefficient by Product Moment method to find if any significant relationship existed between Facebook addiction and Loneliness, between Facebook addiction and PWB and between loneliness and PWB. Regression analysis was computed between Facebook addiction and PWB.

Table 1 Mean, SD and 't' value of males and females on Facebook Addiction Scale, Loneliness and PWB.

	Males	Females			't' value
Facebook	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Addiction	41.75	16.07	34.55	11.21	2.037*
Loneliness	24.00	13.40	23.51	14.23	0.135NS
PWB	168.4	23.23	179.56	24.27	1.81NS

*p<0.05, NS: Not significant

An examination of table 1 shows the mean, SD and 't' value obtained by males and females on Facebook Addiction Scale. Males have obtained a mean score of 41.75 with a standard deviation of 16.07 and females have obtained a mean of 34.55 with a standard deviation of 11.21. The obtained 't' value of 2.037 is statistically significant indicating males and females differ significantly on Facebook addiction, with males being more addicted to the networking site. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no significant gender difference on Facebook addiction among college students” is rejected. On UCLA Loneliness Scale, Males have obtained a mean score of 24 with a standard deviation of 13.40 and females have obtained a mean of 23.51 with a standard deviation of 14.23. The obtained 't' value of 0.135 is statistically not significant indicating males and females do not differ significantly on Loneliness. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no significant gender difference on Loneliness among college students” is accepted.

On Psychological well-being Scale, Males have obtained a mean score of 168.4 with a standard deviation of 23.23 and females have obtained a mean of 179.56 with a standard deviation of 24.27. The obtained 't' value of 1.81 is statistically not significant indicating males and females do not differ significantly on Psychological well-being. Thus, the null hypothesis which states – “There is no significant gender difference on Psychological well-being among college students” is accepted.

Table 4 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between Facebook Addiction and Loneliness; Facebook addiction and PWB and between Loneliness and PWB.

FBA and Loneliness	-0.392**
FBA and PWB	-0.525**
Loneliness and PWB	-0.615**

An observation of table 4 reveals the correlation co-efficient between the variables. All the correlation co-efficient indicate a significant negative relationship. As one variable increases, the other decreases. Increased facebook addiction indicates lowered loneliness; and lowered PWB and increased loneliness reveals lowered PWB. The reverse also being true. Thus, all the correlational hypotheses are rejected.

Table 5 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between Loneliness and areas of Psychological well-being scale.

Areas of PWB Scale	Loneliness
Autonomy	-0.316*
Environmental Mastery	-0.593**
Personal Growth	-0.361**
Positive relations	-0.490**
Purpose in Life	-0.365**
Self-acceptance	-0.536**

An examination of table 5 reveals that all the 6 areas of PWB scale are negatively significant with Loneliness, with autonomy being significant at 0.05 level and the other areas being significant at 0.01 level. A negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases. Thus, an increase in autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance increase, loneliness decreases.

Implications of the study:

- The findings of the study reveal that college students are high on facebook addiction. They can be counseled to focus on academic and social life as the youth of today are the future of our nation.
- College students can be trained to increase autonomy, positive relations with others and see a purpose in life; thus increasing psychological well-being.

Limitations of the study:

- The study was restricted to College students from urban population(Bangalore)
- The sample size was small; hence the study cannot be generalized to the general population.
- The study was restricted to users of only one social networking site(Facebook).
- The analysis was quantitative in nature.

Scope for further study:

The study can be conducted on students using other social networking sites that are steadily gaining popularity; such as Instagram, Snapchat etc.

- Suitable intervention strategies include increasing autonomy, personal mastery, purpose in life can be developed to help College students reduce social media addiction and improve their psychological well-being.
- Further studies can look into other factors which contribute to PWB along with studies to look into the mediators and moderators of this relationship.
- A qualitative approach would reveal richer perspective on social media addiction, loneliness and PWB.

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