INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AND MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract - Today, the usage of social networking by college students has significantly increased and it has certainly far-reaching impacts on the academic and other activities of the students. The present study was conducted to deal with the usage of social networking and how it affects the mental health of among college students in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. Hence, this study is mainly aimed at presenting usage patterns of social networking and the mental health among select college students. For the said purpose a study has been conducted among 100 students in various colleges in Tiruchirappalli. The usage of social networking scale was used to measure the level of use on social networking among students and the mental health scale was also used to measure the level of psychological aspects pertinent to mental health among students. The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between social networking and mental health among the respondents. The findings of the study will be useful in assisting educators, researchers, etc., to develop strategies to enhance student psychological well-being.

Keywords - Social Networking, Mental Health

I. INTRODUCTION

The advancement in Information Technology led to the emergence of social networking. It is currently being used regularly by millions of people in the world. The usage of social networking has been so widespread that they have caught the attention of academics worldwide. The usage of social networking is evidently increasing, particularly among the college students. The term social networking has been defined by different authors in several different ways. There are many social networking websites, with various technological aspects, which supports all range of interests and practices. These social networking websites are becoming much popular among students and professionals which help them in making connect each other, locally and globally. The internet has given us the ability to connect with students from around the globe with a few clicks of a button. And we can easily send information to a friend or get information. Social network sites such as MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Skype etc., have attracted millions of users. Students are nowadays always online for each and every second for chatting, playing, watching movies, research works, etc.,

The social networking support from family and friends have been found to maintain mental health among students. The social networking helps students to cope with everyday life stress and lighten the burden of academic workload in most cases. Without enough encouragement from family and friends, they would be in trouble and also will face psychological problems. College students are often viewed as an honoured population, but they are not resistant to the suffering and disability associated with mental illness. The mental health of students who do social networking is a growing concern. But, this helps to research large number of people during an important period of life. Proportion of relationships with the same characteristics. In addition, a network analysis can involve a core individual and their social relationships or a set of individuals and the relationships that exist among them. The second domain captures the functional aspects of a social network. Social support is the provision of resources from network members as well as a sense of connection and affirmation of value. Social incorporation refers to the extent to which an human being is entrenched in a social community by being involved in a wide range of relationships. Research studies have been conducted assessing maternal social networks directly by describing network members and their relationships to the mother; in addition, mental health research has investigated social networks more indirectly by addressing the better social context and by measuring social support derived from the social network.

Social support can be conceptualized as an asset available to the mother, with increases in the level of support representing increases in benefits. Support can also
be conceptualized as a critical limit variable; for example, having at least one close, confiding relationship is key to a number of maternal mental health outcomes. In current research, more importance has been placed on the qualitative and interpersonal aspects of social networks. Several studies have documented a difference between perceived and received social support, noting that there is a relatively low correlation between the two constructs. Such distinctions are key because it is perceived support, rather than received support, that is most closely tied to health outcomes. Although much of the existing literature places an emphasis on the relative size and proportional composition of social networks, these factors may not always be related to indicators of social support, coping, and sense of community. Although most research highlights the positive features of networks, social relationships can also function negatively by creating stress, conflict, or disappointment or providing ineffective help. Several studies have found that problematic social ties are more predictive of depression than is a lack of supportive relationships.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Maria F. Paramo, et.al., (2014), analyzed the extent to which different sources and cognitive/affective components of perceived social support predicted specific areas of adjustment in a sample of 300 first-year Spain University students. The sample accomplished the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ), the Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS) and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Regression analysis revealed that perceived social support was a good predictor of amendment to college. The association was durable for peers support than family support once University entry grade point average and gender were controlled for. The connection between the number of available others when needed and the satisfaction with available support with adjustment was intermediated by perceived sense of acceptance.

Md Aris Safree Md Yasin and Mariam Adawiah Dzulkifli (2010), examined the relationship between social support and psychological problems among 120 undergraduate university students which were selected using purposive sampling technique. The Social Support Behaviour (SSB) scale was used to measure the level of social support and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) was used to measure the level of psychological aspects among students. Correlation coefficient tool was used to measure the relationship. The findings of this study shows that there were significant negative relationship between social support and psychological problems.

Madge, C., Meek, J., Wellens, J., & Hooley, T. (2009), explained that, according to the previous studies 95% of British undergraduates using social networks regularly. They also add that, Pre-registration of their University face book influencing post-registration in social networks. First year Undergraduates were analyzed through online survey that, they are making new friends in their university through pre-registration in face book and also maintain their friendship outside the campus and their family too. The researchers conclude that students should not take over privilege with face book friends and it is important to maintain a direct communication. They should make use of social networks for their academics, general purpose, self learning and so on.

Pempek, T. A., Yermolyayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009), concluded that Millions of modern young adults use social networking sites. However, modest is known about how much, why, and how they use these sites. In this study, 92 undergraduates completed a diary-like compute each day for a week reporting daily time to evaluate their use of the popular social networking site, Facebook. Results indicated that students use Facebook around 30 min throughout the day as part of their daily habit. Students communicated on Facebook using a one-to-many style, in which they were the creators disseminating content to their friends. Even so, they spent more time observing content on Facebook than in fact redistribution content. Facebook was used most often for social communication, primarily with friends with whom the students had a pre-recognized relationship offline. In addition to traditional identity markers of rising adulthood, such as religion, political ideas, and work, young adults also used media preferences to articulate their identity.

West, A., Lewis, J., & Currie, P. (2009), examined the “Friendship is highly characteristic during the college years. Facebook, commonly used by college students, is designed to make possible communication with different groups of “friends”. This experimental study concerned interviewing a sample of student users of Facebook: it focuses on the expanse to which aged adults, especially parents, are accepted as Facebook friends, and the mentality towards such friendships and possible friendships and what these reveal about opinions of privacy. Students did not appear to visualize of there being two different realms: indeed, the "public" appeared to be the individual's private social world.”

Junco, R., & Cole-Avent, G. A. (2008), in their study explains about the present day learning graduates using online communication tools and networks in their everyday schedule. They use more social websites and messaging for sending files through mails and blogs than individual online users. Age is not applicable in using these types of online sites, most of the online users are having high speed internet in their home for their entertainment and personal usage. Especially students are using new technologies for their academic outcomes, like theses, dissertation and so on.

Subrahmanyam, K., Reich, S. M., Waechter, N., & Espinoza, G. (2008), described in their research that social networks are always make use of by teens and graduate students than the elder ones. Teens use these networks for their entertainment, video chatting and for sending instance messaging. It helps them to make connection with their family and friends regularly, but there
may be an imperfect overlapping between offline and online networks of the participants. It is suggested that adolescence people may use different networks than other people to avoid this type of overlapping and network traffics.

**Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, and Cribbie (2007)**, conducted a study on first year undergraduate students and found that those students who perceived the usage of social networking resources had lower level of psychosomatic problems. This indicates that the hectic situation, for example can be minimized when students are engaged in good social networking. Advice and encouragement from sources of support may also increase the likelihood that an individual will rely on active problem solving and material seeking. These processes helps students in allocating to various stresses in the surroundings and have a positive adjustment process. The supportive actions given by the social support are assumed to safeguard the impact of stress by accumulative effectiveness of surviving efforts, which in turn leads to reduction of distress among students.

**Gurung, (2006),** said that social support refers to the experience actuality esteemed, appreciated, take an interest about, and prised by others who are existing in one’s life. It arises from different sources like domestic, networks, educators, public, or any societal groups to which individual is affiliated. Social support may be in the form of noticeable assistance delivered by others when desirable which comprises evaluation of altered situations, effective managing strategies, and expressive support.

**Holtzman, Newth, & Delongis, (2004).** Stress in daily life can affect individual psychological as well as physical health. On the supplementary influence, good psychological health is well preserved by how people cope with stressful events. Transition from secondary school to Pre-U or University is indeed stressful and considered as part of the big changes that occur on initial maturity stages. Many of the stressors among college students are family separation, variation of new environment, and the establishment of new relationships. In one study, there are at least one-third of all students who meet the criteria of depression and anxiety across different cultures (Calvete & Connor-Smith, 2006). Their difficulties of dealing with stress can lead to a weak academic performance and increased psychological distress (Dwyer, A.L., & Cummings, A.L. 2001).

**Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, (2000),** aimed to explore how perceptions of social support changed across time during the first semester, and how social support, coping strategies, and adjustment were interconnected among 390 first-year students in Beijing, China. Results showed that overall levels of social support did not change pointedly across the first semester, but that support from different sources (parents, peers, teachers, siblings) showed typical patterns of change. Support was definitely related to adjustment and coping skills in a energetic way, and collaborative structural equations model showed that the role of social support operated both directly in relation to adjustment and indirectly through its relations to coping styles.

**III. PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES**

There has been no known research regarding the influence of two variables i.e., use on social networking and mental health among the college students in Tiruchirappalli town of South India.

The formulated objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the influence of age in mental health among the college students, Tiruchirappalli.
- To study the influence of gender in mental health and psychological attitude among the college students, Tiruchirappalli.
- To study the association between various dimensions of social networking of the respondents and their opinion about Usage of social networking.
- To study the difference between the usage of face book and its influences on mental health and psychological aptitude of the respondents.

**IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present research involves empirical testing of problem statements set forth for the study. The methodology adopted for carrying out the investigation of the present study is survey method and design used is descriptive in nature.

**Research Universe and Sample**

This research is focused on the college students in Tiruchirappalli town in the state of TamilNadu, south India. The sampling population is the students in Tiruchirappalli Colleges and Universities. The sample of this study selected using purposive random sampling technique consists of 100 (50 males and 50 females) colleges and universities students. A structured questionnaire was developed and field tested for the present study. The finalized questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from 100 students in the study area. The collected data was accumulated, treated and analyzed.

**Data Collection**

For the purpose of this research, structured questionnaire was used to gather the necessary information. The questionnaire was given to the students individually. While answering the questionnaire any difficulty found by the respondents was solved by the researchers. Once the data were collected from the respondents, the researchers coded the data as given in the scoring keys along with the questionnaire. The scores are entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and later on for analysis with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). T-test was done for
analyzing the difference between dependent and independent variables of the study.

V. TESTS AND RESULTS

The hypotheses for this study are all null-hypotheses only and these will follow now along with the relevant tests and interpretations. This task of the researchers is to accept or reject the null-hypotheses after the relevant tests.

Hypothesis One
There will be no significant difference between the age of students in mental health of the usage of social networking.

**TABLE-1**
Difference between the Age of Students in Mental Health of the Usage of social Networking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T- Value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 Years</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13.5465</td>
<td>3.63207</td>
<td>3.372</td>
<td>Sig (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30 Years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.4000</td>
<td>6.15049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data analysis presented in table-1, it is concluded that there are significant difference between the age of students in mental health of the usage of social networking. Hence, the formulated null hypothesis-1 is rejected and overall concluded that “there are significant difference between the age of students in mental health of the usage of social networking” of the study area.

Hypothesis Two
There will be no significant difference between gender of the students in mental health and psychological aptitude of the usage of social networking.

**TABLE-2**
Difference between the Gender of the students in Mental Health and Psychological Aptitude of the usage of social networking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T- Value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Aptitude</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13.6667</td>
<td>3.92249</td>
<td>.311 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.4516</td>
<td>2.27371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.5385</td>
<td>5.78949</td>
<td>.681 NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.8548</td>
<td>3.01823</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data analysis presented in table-2, there are no significant differences between the gender of the students in mental health and psychological aptitude of the usage of social networking. Hence, the formulated null hypothesis-2 is accepted and overall concluded that “there will be no significant difference between gender of the students in mental health and psychological attitude of the usage of social networking” of the study area.

Hypothesis Three
There is no significant association between various dimensions of social networking of the respondents and their opinion about Usage of social networking.

**TABLE-3**
Association between Various Dimensions of Social Networking of the Respondents and their Opinion about Usage of Social Networking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage of Social Networking</th>
<th>Statistical Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (n=53)</td>
<td>High (n=47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>33 58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>23 41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X^2=12.236</td>
<td>Df=1 .000&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Aptitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>44 78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>12 21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X^2=14.946</td>
<td>Df=1 .000&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data analysis presented in table-3, reveals that there is a significant association between various dimensions of social networking of the respondents and their opinion about usage of social networking. Hence, the calculated value less than table value (p<0.05). So the research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Four
There will be no significant difference between the usage of facebook and its influences on mental health and psychological aptitude of the respondents.

**TABLE-4**
Difference between the usage of Facebook and its influences on Mental Health and Psychological Aptitude of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member of Facebook</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T- Value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Aptitude</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.1892</td>
<td>3.80670</td>
<td>3.909 Sig (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12.5781</td>
<td>1.86705</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.6486</td>
<td>5.73109</td>
<td>.943 Sig (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13.8125</td>
<td>3.19163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the data analysis presented in table-4, there are significant difference between usage of Facebook and its
influences on mental health and psychological attitude of the respondents. Hence, the formulated null hypothesis-4 is rejected and concluded that “there are significant difference between usage of Facebook and it influences on mental health and psychological attitude of the respondents” of study area.

VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

General Findings
Some of the general findings pertaining to the personal profile of the employee in the study area are:

✓ It is found that forty two percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-24 years and 36% of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-30 years.
✓ Fifty percent of the respondents are married and 72% of the respondents are unmarried.
✓ Twenty Eight percent of the respondents are male and 50% of the respondents are female.
✓ Fifty three percent of the respondents belong to the Muslim religion.
✓ Christian religion and 24% of the respondents belong to Hindu religion.
✓ Twenty Eight percent of the respondents are married and 72% of the respondents are unmarried.
✓ Forty six percent of the respondents were under graduates, 32% of the respondents were Post graduates and 16% of the respondents were studying M.Phil., and 6% of the respondents studying Ph.D.,

Hypothesis Related Findings

The hypotheses related findings based on the cross tabulations and statistical tests are given below.

➢ There is a significant difference between the age of students in mental health of the usage of social networking.
➢ There are no significant differences between the gender of the students in mental health and psychological attitude of the usage of social networking.
➢ There is a significant association between various dimensions of social networking of the respondents and their opinion about usage of social networking.
➢ There is a significant difference between usage of facebook and its influences on mental health and psychological attitude of the respondents.

VII. DISCUSSION

This section discusses, how the findings of this research work differs from other findings already established in different studies. The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between influence of personal profile & various dimensions of social networking. 100 college students both males and females were selected as participants in this study. The variables tested were age, gender and level of study, demographic characteristics. Usage of social Networking was tested for two dimensions (Psychological attitude and mental health). The age of students who do social networking has good influence on the mental health. Because, increase the age of the change in the maturity. It causes their mental health change. The gender of students who do social networking has little influence on the psychological attitude and mental health. Because, the gender is at present the only ratio. The male and female are identical for both the social networking of implementing dominance. The usage of social networking influenced more on psychological attitude & mental health.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


