

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AS AN ONLINE ADDICTION AND ITS EFFECT ON MENTAL HEALTH: A PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW

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Abstract:

Social networking sites (SNS) refer to a type of online social platform that users use to create social networks or social connections with others who possess similar type of interests, backgrounds, hobbies, or real- world connections. The users (students, teachers etc) exchange thoughts, teaching-learning materials, digital images, videos, and postings with others and tell them about online or offline activities and events, in their social network. These individuals use websites, which may include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc. However, excessive use of such websites may cause people to develop a social networking addiction, which is commonly known as online addiction. Excessive use of social networking sites evidently, can raise the risk of major mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, tension, stress, mental disease, behavioral disorders, and a general lack of happiness with life among users. After collecting the review of literature from different database sources, this study aims to achieve the following objectives: 1) To study the social networking sites as a new online addiction. 2) To know the effects of SNSs on mental health. The reviewers used the Exclusion and Inclusion criteria (PRISMA) to achieve the set objectives. The findings of the different studies indicate that Social Networking Addicts have more social anxiety, higher rates of depression, poor body image, and reduced levels of empathy and compassion towards others than Non-SNSs Addicts. The results also indicate that there is a significant difference between males and females in several areas of mental health, such as perception of reality, personality integration, positive self-evaluation, and group oriented attitude. This study is purely based on secondary data. The data is collected from different sources like Google, research papers, articles, Google scholar and from different journals.

Keywords: Online addiction, Social Networking Addiction, Social Media Addiction, Behavioral addiction, Mental Health, Anxiety, Happiness,

Introduction

Communication, as a social process, is pursued verbally through reading, writing and speaking or non-verbally through body language and gestures. According to Keith Davis, "It is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another". Technology is becoming a part of our daily life and is widely used for communication services. People interact with each other through social network platforms, mobile phones, messaging services, video conferencing, and chat rooms. Social networking sites (SNS), as the name implies, refer to a fundamental platform for bringing together

individuals from various cultures, communities and ethnic groups residing throughout the world. In the present competitive world, everyone is preoccupied with their jobs, which makes it difficult to meet each other. In this connection, social networking sites play a crucial role in providing virtual platforms like Skype, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and video chatting to connect people together. //More than 2.5 billion people use the Internet on regular basis, and in 2014, it was estimated that 1.8 billion of them used social networking sites (SNSs), which is around 25% of the world's total population. With 1.3 billion, 1 billion, and 645 million active registered users, respectively, Facebook (Facebook, Inc., Menlo Park, California, USA), YouTube (YouTube, San Bruno, California, USA), and Twitter (Twitter, Inc., San Francisco, California, USA) are the most popular SNSs. It is recorded that people started using social media (SNS) on average between 1.5 and 3.7 hours each day in 2015. Web-based SNSs are considered as a new method of information sharing and communication. Digital technology (Tablets, Smartphones, Notebooks, etc.) and the internet have lately helped social networking sites gain popularity (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Presently, a lot of social networking sites (such as blogs, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) are in use. Although these websites are beneficial to people in general, they have certain drawbacks. Excessive use of social networking sites would lead to social networking addiction. Addiction can be broadly divided into two categories: 1). Physical Addiction such as use of alcohol, tobacco, cocaine etc. and 2). Behavioral Addiction such as using phones and computers, shopping, internet addiction etc.

To keep the objectives of this paper in view, researchers have highlighted only social networking addiction, which is a growing phenomenon in the present world. Social networking websites and applications enable learners to exchange study materials and other relevant items. One of the most well-known effects of social networking is the superior worldwide communication it has made everything possible. Social media's so much prominence and reach may be a factor in cases of cyber bullying, harassment, and the dissemination of hate speech. Sometimes, it too happens that privacy, data security and personal data of the individuals are misused by the usage of social media platforms. On the other hand, overuse of social networks can have a harmful influence on self- esteem and body image. People suffer from feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and despair, resulting in diminished productivity and significant harm to interpersonal relationships. Since there is so much information available on social networking sites, it becomes difficult to identify reliable sources, which encourages the spread of false information and fake news.

Students, as a matter of fact, are among the most significant users of social networks and the virtual world. Overusing social net works has a severe impact on their academic performance, as well as social, emotional, physical, and psychological health. Numerous studies have revealed that excessive use of social networking sites might raise the chance of acquiring mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress, and depression, as well as causing users to feel unhappy and generally unsatisfied with their own lives. Researchers from Chicago University highlighted that addiction to social networking sites can be more powerful than addiction to drugs and alcohol.

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alcohol.

Objectives:

This review aims to explore the social networking sites which bring addiction and develop serious mental problems among the younger generation. This systematic review of literature aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the social networking sites as a new online addiction.
3. To know the effects of social networking sites' addiction on mental health.

Methodology:

To conduct and report this review, and achieve the above mentioned objectives, the reviewers used the Preferred Reference Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyse criteria (**PRISMA**). The reviewers attempted to find more current writing that had been published within the last 11 years (from 2012 to 2022). Three databases were used in the search, which include SCOPUS, Pub Med and Google Scholar. The keywords used in the initial search were: (a) Social networking sites, (b) Social Media addiction, (c) Internet addiction, (c) social networking sites addiction, (d) Facebook addiction and (e) Mental health. The initial search produced the highest number of results. The number of results found was decreased by considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria as shown in Table 1 & 2. The remaining 80 articles were screened on abstract, with 57 found to be ineligible. The search was stopped when 23 of the most relevant journal articles were found. The journal articles were studied and reviewed thoroughly:

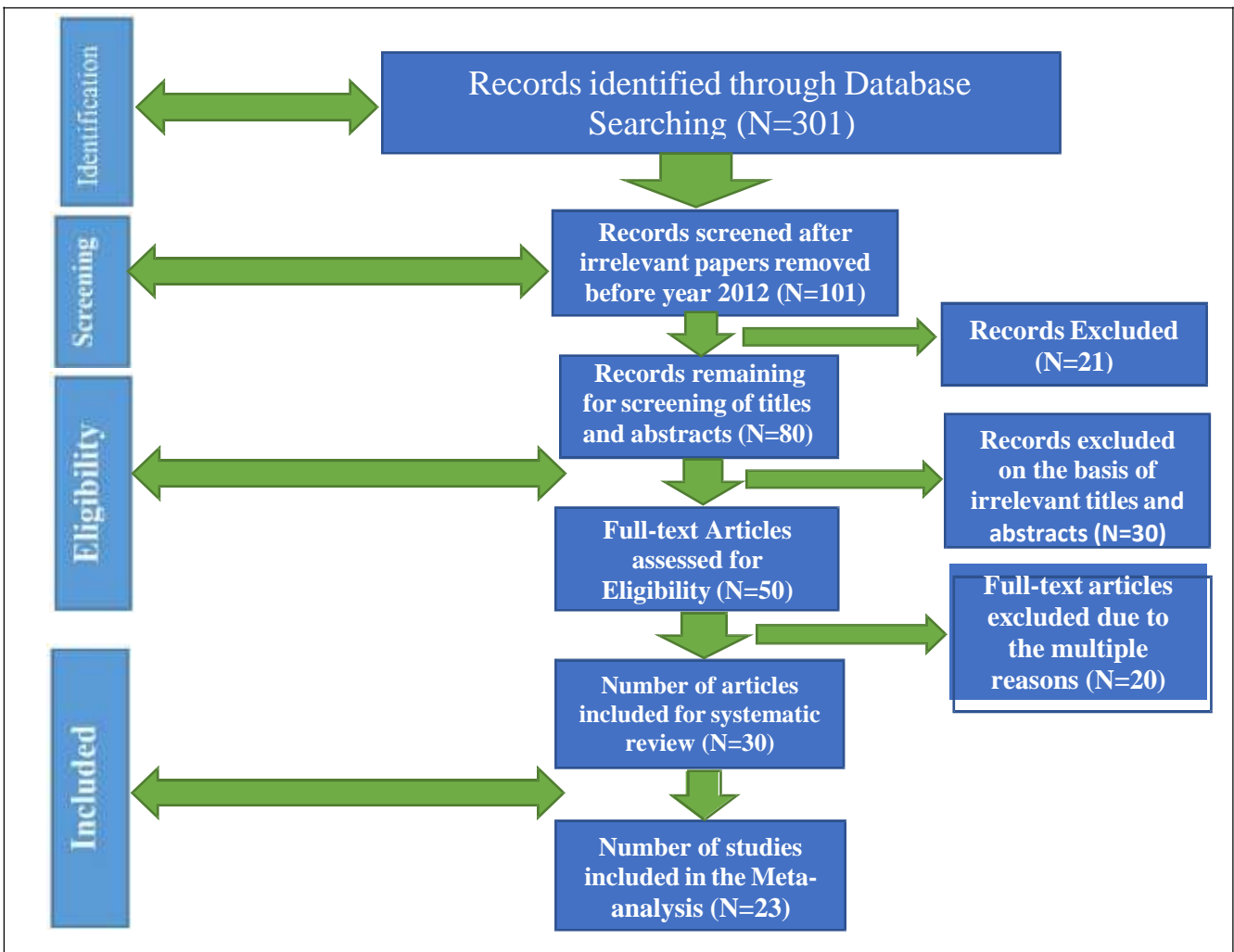
Table1.Inclusion and Exclusion criteria presented in order:

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria presented in order:

Exclusion/Inclusion criteria, presented in order	Particulars	Literature review identified	Remaining for final review
Key terms	Social Networking sites, Social Networking addiction (SNSA), Social, Media addiction, Internet addiction, Facebook addiction, Mental Health	301301	301
Exclusion criteria	-----		301
Studies excluded	before 2012	200	200

Inclusion criteria Studies included in the meta-analysis	From 2013 to 2022	101	101
	-----	23	23

Table No . 2, Final Data for the study was selected by using the PRISAMA technique



Findings of review of literature:***1. Social networking sites as an online addiction***

The development of the Internet and its use resulted in a notable increase in concern about Social Networking Sites (SNSs). There are a numerous social networking sites to which people might become addicted. According to a Harvard University research, self-disclosure on social networking sites activates the same area of the brain that is activated when using an addictive drug. Social networking sites (SNSs) are a critical computer-generated combination that has been called as a "Global Customer Phenomenon." In order to give new insights into online social networking addiction and Mental Health, this paper will discuss the findings of several studies drawn from various researches.

Online social networking addiction, as well as Internet addiction in general, are recent and under studied issues that are widely discussed and sometimes disputed issues in the psychiatric literature (1,2,3,4,5,6). According to the observations, abrupt discontinuation of online social networking (i.e., loss of Internet connection) may elicit signs and symptoms that match those found during drug, alcohol, nicotine withdrawal symptoms in certain chronic users.

An investigation undertaken by California State University discovered that those who used social media at least 58 times per week were three times more likely to feel socially alienated and unhappy than those who used social media less than 9 times per week. Many articles have considered online social networking as a potential addiction (1,2,4,6,7,8). SNS addiction is a relatively recent subject in psychiatry study. The most crucial question is probably to see whether SNS addiction is a mental condition that should be identified and treated as such. The International Classification of Diseases and Health Problems (ICD-10) Tenth Revision defined several specific criteria for dependence syndrome, including a strong desire or sense of compulsion, difficulty controlling consumption behavior, physiological withdrawal state after reduction, evidence of tolerance, and so on (09). If three or more of the above-mentioned criteria are present (at a certain time period) within the preceding year, a diagnosis should be established. Many of these diagnostic criteria may be applied to a small fraction of chronic Facebook users who have difficulty with regular everyday functioning as a result of their prolonged SNS use. However, this technique must be used with caution, since it may become difficult in the future to separate SNS addiction from Internet addiction, which is a much more wide spread condition (Internet addiction disorder, problematic Internet usage, or compulsive Internet use). Furthermore, neither Internet nor social media addiction has been listed in the most recent disease categorization books, such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). Moreover, SNS and Internet-related mental issues are commonly encountered in collaboration with other diagnosable mental diseases (5). As a result, it is uncertain if potential SNS addiction is a separate illness or only a symptom of other mental conditions, such as personality disorders.

An estimated 27% of youngsters who spend 3 or more hours each day on social media have bad mental health symptoms. Since children and young people's minds and social abilities are still growing, excessive usage of social networking sites is far more detrimental. Research evidences are there that adolescents who use social media on a regular basis from a young age have drastically impaired social

interaction abilities. Despite the fact that users connect with one another on digital platforms, many of these interactions do not always transfer effectively to the real world. Studies have highlighted that these people experience more social anxiety in groups, higher rates of depression, poor body image, and reduced levels of empathy and compassion towards others. The usage of online sites for personal reasons during working hours, often known as cyber slacking (11) or cyber loafing (12) has become more problematic (13). Employers usually worry that such usage would decrease productivity and so result in economic loss (14). This anxiety may be justified, as around four out of every five employees who use computers at work, browse online pages for personal reasons during working hours (15). As a response, organizations have attempted to curb such Internet use by implementing special office usage policies (16). However, it has been proposed that use of the Internet for personal purposes during working hours may have some positive impacts, such as reducing stress and boredom and enhancing job satisfaction and creativity (17). Another study of 191 respondents indicated that the majority of respondents thought that some type of cyber loafing at work would be acceptable. Men used the internet more when compared to women. Men, somewhat more than women, believed that cyber loafing had a beneficial influence on their job. Browsing was shown to have a beneficial influence on mood in general, but e-mailing was found to have a negative effect on their job (19).

Online social networking services have grown in popularity over the last decade (22). Such sites are defined as web-based services that enable individuals to: 1) create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system 2) to prepare a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and 3) view their list of connections as well as those made by others within the system (23). Such sites are expected to have over one billion users globally. According to one study based, addictive towards social networking sites were shown to be positively connected to personality factors Extroversion and Neuroticism, and negatively related to conscientiousness (24). Another study highlighted that Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience were all positively connected to the frequency of social net work site usage (25). An online study of 131 psychology students in the United States (20) revealed that 78% used SNSs, with 82% of men and 75% of females having SNS profiles. 57% of individuals used social media on a daily basis. Reading/responding to comments on their SNS page and/or posts to one's wall endorsed by 60%; "the "wall" is a special profile feature on Facebook where people can post comments, pictures, and links that can be responded to), sending/responding to messages/invites(14%), and browsing friends' profiles/walls/pages(13%);(20) were the activities most frequently engaged in on SNSs. This study is projected to become a key focus of many research investigations in the future, as well as the subject of a large debate among psychiatrists, psychologists, and other professionals.

2) Effects of social net working sites on mental health:

Excessive use of social networking sites can lead individuals to unhappiness and overall discontent with life. Such people can also have chances of acquiring mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, stress etc. Constantly comparing oneself to others can lead to feelings of self-consciousness or a demand for perfection and order, both of which can appear as social anxiety disorder.

Excessive SNS use has a negative influence on students' psychological moods, mental health, daily

routine work, sleep quality, relationships, and overall well-being. It has been reported that, there is a negative relationship between addictive habits and mental health (**Singh, Shruti, and Sharma 2022**). The findings of one of the study indicated that an overpowering demand for SNS leads to mental health issues (**27**). The findings of the study also revealed a link between addictive activity on social networking sites and the mental health of science students. In terms of mental health, research also demonstrates that rural SNS addicted students are not significantly different from urban SNS dependent students (**Sushma 2020**). Another study highlighted the influence of the internet on students' conduct and how excessive usage of teleology was risky and hazardous to them. The results indicated that, addicted pupils suffer from lack of patience, signs of isolation and emotional disturbance, and social connection disruption. The study's findings also reveal that the level of internet addiction influences three personality factors: Neuroticism, Extroversion, and Agreeableness (**S Dahiya 2020**). There is a positive correlation between social media use, bad mental health, and low self-esteem, according to research. While social networking sites have their advantages, but utilizing them excessively can lead to feelings of isolation and unhappiness in life. These negative emotional reactions are caused not simply as a result of the social pressure of sharing items with others, but also as a result of the comparison of material objects and lifestyles that these sites do promote.

The findings of the study undertaken by Priti (**2019**) indicated a positive relationship between depression, anxiety and loneliness of adolescents. The SPSS software was used to analyse the data and it was found that adolescent girls experience greater depression, anxiety and loneliness than adolescent males. It was also found that there is a negative relationship between internet addiction and mental health. The sample for this research ranged in age from 17 to 23. The study used an online addiction test to identify addicted college students (**Geeta K, 2018**). It was suggested that there is a significant difference between males and females in several areas of mental health such as perception of reality, personality integration, positive self-evaluation, and group oriented attitude. On the basis of adjustment, researchers found that non addicts are significantly different from addicts (**C Pratika 2015**).

According to a Harvard University research, social media has a major negative influence on the emotional well-being and lifestyles of chronic users, severely damaging their real-life relationships and academic accomplishment. Thus, all the above mentioned studies show that social networking has a direct relationship with mental health.

Limitations:

This review study does have some limitations. One of the limitations of this study is that just 08 journals were chosen. The studies chosen were entirely from a few countries: Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, and India. This implies that the study only represents the situation of young people in these nations who are addicted to social networking. As a result, this analysis cannot be generalized to young individuals with social networking addiction in all countries. Secondly, some journal article findings can only address one or two objectives in this review. Most of the reviews of the present study relate to a cross-sectional study rather than a causal correlation research or an experimental study.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has attempted to systematically analyze the existing literature of social networking sites as a new online addiction and its effect on mental health. Although the results of the study were not completely consistent, this review found a general association between social networking use and mental health issues. Although there is positive evidence for a link between social networking and mental health, the opposite has also been reported. Anxiety and depression were the most commonly measured outcome. The prominent risk factors for anxiety and depression emerging from this review comprised time spent, activity, and addiction to social networking. In the present world, anxiety is considered as one of the basic mental health problems. Some students experience anxiety from the fear of loss of social connections, which causes them to try to respond and check all their friends' messages on a regular basis. On the contrary, depression is caused because of unnecessary use of social networking and media. Depression is limited not only to Facebook but also to other social networking sites, which causes psychological problems. A study found that individuals who are involved in social media, games, texts, mobile phones, etc. are more likely to experience depression, stress, tension and many other mental issues. studies have found that using social networking platform can have a detrimental effect on the psychological health of its users. This systematic review has found that social media envy can affect the level of anxiety and depression in individuals. In addition, other potential causes of anxiety and depression have been identified, which require further exploration.

Social networking sites are a vital interpersonal communication tool for both young people and others all over the world. Parents, instructors, and counsellors are the primary people who can advise young people on how to use social networking responsibly and prevent them from becoming addicted to it. Counsellors must be well-versed in mental health issues that may impact young people addicted to social networking in order to give better counselling services. Meanwhile, counsellors must be knowledgeable about the social networking addiction and use more research- tested therapies with young people. To give more effective developmental aid and assistance to young people, parents, teachers, and counsellors must be well-informed about their behaviours, needs, perceptions, social interaction patterns, and emotional reactions. Future researchers should undertake studies to determine which sort of social network is most popular among young people and which has the most impact, and there is also a need to investigate the impact of social networking sites on other generations. Since working on Social networking addiction is a new study that is rapidly growing and gaining popularity, there are many unexplored and unexpected constructive answers associated with it. Hence, many more research is needed to explore much about the phenomena of social networking addiction.

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