

## **COMPARISON OF SM ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Due to developments in digital technology, SM has become an effective medium for establishing connections on a global scale. Although there are many shared characteristics between the sexes, there also seems to be a wide range of variances in how men and women approach and handle social relationships. This study set intended to quantify the extent of juvenile SM addiction and to explore potential differences in addiction rates by gender. This study is a cross-sectional poll of 481 undergraduates (160 male and 321 female). Ten schools in NCR, India, were surveyed, and their pupils were selected using a systematic random selection technique. Use of the Semi-Structured method and Bergen's SM Addiction model were used. Descriptive analysis in the present research shows that 31.6% of individuals had a SM addiction. This study shows that men and women are quite different when it comes to their dependence on SM. The use of social networking sites must be regulated, and young people must be made aware of the risks associated with them. The benefits and drawbacks of SM usage may be better understood if research data were divided into three categories: the person, the community, and the classroom. It's possible that treating adolescent SM addiction requires a multifaceted approach.

**Keywords:** *SM addiction, Youth, Gender, Male, Female, NCR, India*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Griffiths (2013) introduced the idea of tech. He defines the term tech addictions as acts involving intense human-machine interactions that result in non-chemical but behavioural alterations. The increased and high use of the web has a bad impact on the physiological, biological, mental, and social development of its users (Caplan, 2002). The rapid expansion in internet usage, particularly online networks and time spent on them, has prompted academics to debate the changes in behaviour that contribute to addiction. Nowadays, there is an increase in uncontrolled Social Media (SM) use among students, including problematic computer usage that disrupts the running of regular lives as well as other key sectors of life. The changes in the psychological development along with the simple accessibility to the internet makes the youth more sensitive to pathological internet usage. The susceptibility may also be linked to a decline in parental supervision of young people. Gender differences are often mentioned as a demographic variable that might impact SM use. It might be related to psychological characteristics such as aggression, expressive styles, and friendship structure, or it could be due to differences in cognitive functioning between male and female. Internet addiction also leads to poor academic performance and reduced job performance. Unhealthy eating habits, drug misuse, physical inactivity, and sleep deprivation have all been seen among students hooked to the SM (Sussman et al., 2011). The high usage of SM programmes seems to be increasing fast, raising worries about addiction.

According to Griffiths (2013), addiction may be defined by six variables: salience, tolerance, mood modulation, relapse, withdrawal, and conflict. The internet has given rise to SM sites, which are online communities where users may build individual or public accounts, engage with others, communicate with them, and even gather with others who have a shared interest. It also comprises many websites and programmes that enable users to communicate ideas, thoughts, emotions, beliefs, personal and social experiences, as well as worldwide communication. FB, Insta, Whats App and Twitter are among the most popular and widely used virtual social networks (Larson, 2015).

Several research have been carried out to determine whether or not the internet and its apps are addictive. SM addiction was found in 36.9% of Indian students, producing health problems (Masthi et al, 2018), and 29.5% of Singapore students (Wang et al.,2018). Gender was revealed to be a key factor influencing SM addiction in research done by Steggink (2015) in the Netherlands and Monacis et al. (2017) in Italy. While the reasons for utilising SM varied by gender. It seems that female students are more hooked to SM than male students (Simsek, 2019). Females are observed to utilise it most of the time to preserve current relationships, stay in contact with existing ones, and for academic objectives, whilst men use it to form new relationships. On the other hand, male students were more addicted to SM than female students (Azizi, 2019).

In India, SM addiction is rising as a health and behavioural issue, particularly among the young population. This research issue has not yet been extensively researched in the country with respect to gender, therefore this study intends to further investigate SM addiction among male and female in India, as well as the comparative differences in its prevalence.

Thus, the following objectives can be deduced for this study:

1. To study the SM addiction among youth in India
2. To compare the SM addiction among youth in India

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

### **Study design**

The current research is based on a cross-sectional survey. Purposive sampling has been used to choose 10 institutions in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. Using the sample calculator with a degree of confidence of 95% and a class interval of 4, the present research contained a total of 481 respondents drawn from the whole student body. Participants in the research were limited to those students who were really utilising the social networking sites and between the age group of 15-19 years. Due to the importance of maintaining anonymity, informed permission was collected from all participants.

### **Data collection**

Personal information including age, gender, educational status, use of multiple SM accounts, time spent on multiple SM sites, purpose for use, etc. have been collected using semi-structured data sheets. Six items make up the Bergen SM Addiction Scale (BSMAS), each of which corresponds to a component of addiction as outlined by Kuss and Griffiths (2011). Recent experiences are used to generate a composite score between 6 and 30, with each item answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very seldom (1) to very regularly (5).

## Data analysis

SPSS version 20 was used for data analysis. We evaluated the demographics data, SM dependency, and sense of self-worth using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. The Mann–Whitney u test was used to compare the prevalence of SM addiction across men and women, as well as the effects of SM use on individuals' sense of self-worth.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Sex of the participants**

Sex	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	160	33.3
Female	321	66.7

**Table 2: Time spent in usage of SM by respondents**

Time (hours)	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
< 1 hour	77	16
1-2 hours	145	30.1
2-3 hours	112	23.3
> 3 hours	147	30.6

**Table 3: SM sites that are used daily by respondents**

SM sites	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Face book	256	53.2
Instagram	200	41.6
Twitter	16	3.3
WhatsApp	422	87.7
Others	54	11.4

**Table 4: Purpose of SM use by respondents**

Purpose	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Social networking	437	90.9
Online shopping	359	74.6
Information surfing	353	73.5

News	314	65.3
Download	371	77.1
Gaming	158	32.8
Television serials, shows	365	75.9
Pornography	62	12.9
Distance Education	122	25.4

**Table 5: Prevalence of SM addiction among respondents**

SM addiction	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Addicted	152	31.6
Non addicted	329	68.4

**Table 6: Gender difference in SM addiction among respondents**

Variables	Mean Rank		Mann Whitney U value	Z	p value
	Male (N= 160)	Female (N=321)			
SM addiction	216.29	253.32	21726.500	-3.418	0.001

A total of 481 college-going students were chosen for the research, among which the majorities 160 were male and 321 were female. Out of 481 respondents, 30.6 percent spending more than three hours a day on SM, 23.3 percent spent two to three hours, 30.1 percent spent one to two hours, and just 16 percent spent less than one hour on SM (table 2). According to Table 3, 87.7 percent of participants used WhatsApp, whereas 53.2 percent used Facebook and 41.6 percent used Instagram. Table 4 summarises the numerous reasons for using the internet and SM. According to the findings, practically all of the participants use the internet for social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. According to the survey, 90.9 percent of the total users used it for social networking, 74.6 percent for shopping, 73.4 percent for browsing information, 65.3 percent for news, 32.8 percent for gaming, and 12.9 percent for pornography. Table 5 depicts SM addiction among research participants. According to the Bergen SM addiction scale, the majority of the participants (329) were determined to be non-addicts to SM, while the remaining (152) were deemed to be addicted to SM. The table 6 shows the prevalence of SM addiction among male and female participants. The male mean rank was determined to be 216.29, while the female mean rank was discovered to be 253.32. There was a significant difference between the two groups [ $U(481) = 21726.500$ ,  $z = -3.418$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ].

Access to SM is found in all age categories, but especially among the expanding population and young. The present survey indicated that 31.6 percent of people are

addicted to SM. Similar research on SM addiction done among students by Masthi et al., (2018) indicated addiction in 36% of users. Similar research in Tezpur by Ali et al., (2019) among teens discovered that 34.0 percent were highly hooked to the internet and its use.

Hampton (2011) discovered that there are studies that reveal gender differences in the usage of Facebook in his study. Sharifah (2011), for example, emphasises female students from a Malaysian university who have a strong association between their motivations for using Facebook and their Facebook addiction. Other studies have shown similar results, with more women hooked to SM.

On the other hand, the present study runs counter to earlier studies that found that men are more likely to be addicted to SM. Kannan (2019) conducted a study to investigate the gender disparities that exist in online addiction. The prevalence of addiction was determined to be 22.8 percent among men but only 8.1 percent among girls. Similarly, a study that was conducted on college students by Alnjadat et al. (2019) revealed that a much higher percentage of males (49.6%) are addicted to social media than girls (32%), respectively.

Fox and Warber (2013) discovered that the reasons men and women get addicted to social media are same. Wang et al. (2015) conducted research in China and discovered that there was no correlation between gender and addiction to social media platforms. Both Jaffarkarimi et al. (2016) and Blachnio et al. (2016) made important discoveries in their respective countries of Malaysia and Poland, respectively. Because of this, people of different cultures have various ways of understanding the fact that gender is a factor in the development of social media addiction in specific countries.

## CONCLUSION

SM addiction is a behavioural addiction characterised by excessive concern for SM, driven by uncontrolled impulse usage, and dedicating so much time and effort that it disrupts other key aspects of life. Excessive usage may lead to unhappiness and overall discontent in life, as well as an increased chance of developing psychological discomfort such as worry and stress. It also produces social anxiety disorder by constantly comparing oneself to others and creating a demand for perfection. At the same time, preventative actions might be implemented. Setting limits to restrict screen use, parental supervision, or, in extreme cases, professional involvement from counsellors may all be beneficial. Cognitive behavioural therapy may also be used to change one's thinking and behaviour habits.

In certain aspects, the current research is constrained. It was held at a few colleges located in the NCR region of India. College-age students seem to have easy access to SM and a high proportion of mobile phone ownership. It may not be the same in other parts of the country. Given that this condition may have influenced the study's findings, further research should be undertaken in a bigger context that includes youth from various parts of the state. Secondly, the information in the research come from the respondents of college-going youngsters, with a higher female gender ratio. Because the amount and features of SM addiction may vary between school-age adolescents and adults, future research should look into the issue in adult groups. This might provide an opportunity to compare generational features of SM addiction. The culture in which the kids grow up and behave may have an impact on their usage of technology. As a result, cross-cultural research may give a more comprehensive knowledge of SM addiction. Furthermore, the current study was quantitative; a qualitative analysis might provide more diverse results.

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