



PERSONALITY, SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AND HAPPINESS OF ADOLESCENTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract: The world has taken a huge leap in terms of technological progression and has tied down a sizeable population to smart devices that show the entire world with the click of a few buttons. The adolescents are more vulnerable to such advancements and are the ones who are more prone to addiction. Addiction to anything shows a lack of the ability to control impulses, so the excessive usage of anything, such as social media, is considered an impulse control disorder. Social media addiction is an overwhelming and destructive use of the internet, and those who use social media to this degree have been reported to have negative effects on their professional, academic, and social lives. The technology has changed today's relationships and, as a result, face-to-face interpersonal skills are disappearing among people. Happiness is deriving the pleasure and satisfaction out of something, spending time with one another. In the social media context, people are delighted when they see increased number of likes/comments on a post. This utopian world starts controlling the gear of happiness. Whether one gets influenced or addicted to social media networking or not depends only on the kind of personality that he or she is bestowed with. The five traits that, in varying amounts, make up most human personalities are extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and neuroticism. This research study is intended to find out what kind of a relation exists between personality traits, happiness perceived and social media addiction in adolescents aged between 15 to 18. In order to arrive at the same, 200 school going adolescents were administered the Social Media Addiction scale, Happiness Scale and the Big Five Personality Inventory Scale. As hypothesized, some personality traits had a positive correlation with social media addiction.

Keywords: Adolescents and social media addiction, happiness, personality traits, Social media addiction, social networking addiction

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INTRODUCTION

Social Media Addiction, Personality Types and Happiness: An Overview

Gone are the days when people sat together and had luncheons or suppers, interacted with one another. Now is the era when all the members in the family stay under the same roof but are so disconnected with one another, that they do not know what exactly is happening in one another's lives. A keener look at this sorry state of affairs would definitely point out fingers at one major reason which is nothing but, technological advancement. Technological advancements have definitely made things a lot easier but at the same time have complicated lives to a great extent. To such an extent that people have become addicted to their smartphones and to the social networking media which are aplenty. This has become a common scenario with all the age groups.

Toddlers know how to handle a smartphone and the elders and older generation are making efforts to handle these social networking platforms like Whatsapp or Facebook as they make keeping



connected with their family easier. There is absolutely no problem when people are aware as to where they need to draw a line. The problem sets in and ends up in addiction when they do not know where to draw this line. It is indeed a very sad story with majority of the adolescents too, as they spend a whole lot of their quality time boring into the smartphones where they have these numerous apps installed. It has been found that all the time being spent on the social media is in a way having an impact on the mental health of the individuals.

WhatsApp, Facebook & Instagram or any other social media interaction platforms are used for both business and personal communication and its application has brought numerous advantages in terms of increasing connectivity, sharing ideas, expanding business and online learning. However, excessive usage and dependence on these platforms has given rise to numerous psychological issues and it borders on addiction. Addiction to online social networking sites (SNS) results in several psychological disorders, including depressive symptoms, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Overuse of social media can cause narcissistic tendencies in teens and anti-social behavior among young adults. Studies found that daily use of Facebook can make people more prone to depression, anxiety and other psychological disorders.

(a) Research reveals that, more the number of friends one has on Facebook, less socially adjusted he or she is. A study conducted on students entering college found that those with several hundred Facebook friends had less actual friends, and their social skills were poorer than those who had less Facebook friends.

(b) Facebook and other social media networks can have a negative impact on learning. Studies conducted on students from middle school through college showed that frequent use of social media services resulted in lower grades.

Rather than becoming addicted to the medium per se, some adolescents develop an addiction to specific activities they carry out online. Broadly, there are five different types of internet addiction, namely

- (a) Computer addiction (i.e., computer game addiction)
- (b) Information overload (i.e., web surfing addiction)
- (c) Internet compulsions (i.e., online gambling or online shopping addiction)
- (d) Cybersexual addiction (i.e., online pornography or online sex addiction), and
- (e) Cyber-relationship addiction (i.e., an addiction to online relationships).

Attraction is one of the key components that make individuals vulnerable to becoming addicted to specific behaviours or substances. Accordingly, due to their egocentric framework, SNSs allow individuals to present themselves positively that may “raise their spirits” (i.e., enhance their mood state) because it is considered as pleasurable. This leads to positive experiences that can potentially dig and facilitate learning experiences that ignite the development of SNS addiction. SNS addiction can be equated to any substance-related addictions, having same properties. It routes through the same stages as any ‘classic’ addiction routes, namely

(a) Experimenting - We experiment with the upcoming/famous platform available. It leads to Mood overhaul and initially, one derives the happiness out of it.

(b) Regular Usage - There is a salience change in behaviour, thinking, and emotional aspect of individual personality. Individuals are often preoccupied with the SNS usage.

(c) Addiction – Ever increasing usage leads to dependence on SNS (addiction), and, like any other material addiction, if usage is restricted or stopped, individual tends to feel emotionally weak and often show great resistance. It also results in less tolerance ability of individual. In SNS addiction, if there is some abstinence period, the addict reverts back to its excessive SNS usage.



It has been established that certain personality types succumb to Social Networking Addiction. The Big 5 Personality Inventory helps identify those personality traits that individuals may show as contributing towards addiction behavior. They are:

- (a) **Extroversion (E)**, the personality trait of seeking fulfillment from sources outside the self or in community.
- (b) **Agreeableness (A)** reflects individuals' adjustment of their behavior to suit others.
- (c) **Conscientiousness (C)** is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking.
- (d) **Neuroticism (N)** is the personality trait of being emotional.
- (e) **Openness to Experience (O)** is the personality trait of seeking new experience and intellectual pursuits.

Happiness is deriving pleasure and satisfaction out of something. In the social media networking context, the individual gets delighted when they see increased number of likes/comments on a post. This utopian world starts controlling the gear of happiness. Instead of spending time with parents/friends and nature around us, we prefer to spend time with the touch screen world, and tend to search for happiness

through that behavior. It can be reason for happiness only for sometime though, and eternal happiness is not found. After sometime, the so called happiness vanishes away and it takes U-turn, and makes people feel jealous/unhappy by seeing others' happy posts. Others are having fun on vacations, their success/achievements in life, makes people feel unhappy.

MAIN BODY OF THE PAPER

The present study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the relationship between Personality, Social Networking Addiction and Happiness among adolescents.
2. To study whether gender difference exists with regards to Personality, Social Networking Addiction and Happiness amongst the adolescents.

Sample: The study was carried out in the city of Visakhapatnam and 200 students in the adolescent age group formed the sample of the study. Adolescent age group is the most vulnerable of all groups in the school going children. Age and gender were the major demographic variables considered for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample under the Demographic Variables (N=200)

Demographic Variables	Description	No. of respondents	Percent %
Age	15	22	11
	16	79	39.5
	17	89	44.5
	18	10	5
Gender	Boys	93	46.5
	Girls	107	53.5

Three standardized questionnaires are used to arrive at an understanding of the purpose of the study. They are Social Networking Addiction Scale, Big 5 Personality Test and Oxford Happiness Scale.

Social Networking Addiction Scale: The test is designed to measure the intensity of one's usage of the SNS, and determine whether it hampers the daily

life of the user. The scale will aid us in identifying the addiction of the adolescent to various social networking sites/media. The scale consists of 32 items for evaluation. Social Networking Addiction is measured through three dimensions namely Impulsivity, Virtual freedom and Negative Outcome.



Factor 1 (Impulsivity): Impulsivity is the most important characteristics of any kind of addiction. Impulsivity is the tendency to act without any forethought, to act in a whim. This factor is about those items which mention about the users’ thought about the SNS usage, their inability to control their urge to go back online.

Factor 2 (Virtual Freedom): It is the sense of being free to do what a user wants in the online social networking due to the innumerable possibilities provided by the virtual space. The sense of virtual freedom that young users enjoy on the social networking sites hampers their skills on physical world.

Factor 3 (Negative Outcome): It signifies the undesirable consequences from the use of SNS. This factor deals with those items which talk about the consequences in the users’ personal, social, relationship due to the usage of social networking sites. Individuals see their general offline life being affected by the use of SNS.

Big 5 Personality Test: The test will help in understanding why we act the way we do and how our personality is structured. It will help understand the type of personality the adolescent possesses. 44 items in the scale helps in identifying the personality traits of individual. There are five personality traits:

(i) **Extroversion (E)** is the personality trait of seeking fulfillment from sources outside the self or in community. High scores tend to be very social while low scores prefer to work on their projects alone.

(ii) **Agreeableness (A)** reflects how much individuals adjust their behavior to suit others. High scores are typically polite and like people. Low scores tend to ‘tell it like it is’.

(iii) **Conscientiousness (C)** is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking. High scores tend to follow rules and refer clean homes. Low scores may be messy and cheat others.

(iv) **Neuroticism (N)** is the personality trait of being emotional.

(v) **Openness to Experience (O)** is the personality trait of seeking new experience and intellectual pursuits. High scores may day dream a lot. Low scores may be very down to earth.

Oxford Happiness Scale: This tool indicates the levels of happiness that the adolescent has and it has 29 items. The score ranges from one to six which ranges from not happy to too happy. Is happiness only a slew of pleasurable events or there is something deeper to it than the face value? The scores on this questionnaire in this research context help understand the pleasure that social networking brings along to the adolescents.

The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 23 software. The descriptive statistics were generated to understand the frequencies, means and standard deviations of the sample taken for this research study. Correlations, t tests and F tests were employed wherever necessary.

Demographic Variables and Social Networking Sites Addiction:

When the significance was tested between different age groups and components of Social Networking Addiction, it has been found that impulsivity is significant at age group of 18. The reason for the dominant impulsivity at age of 18 is due to biological, social and social media influences. Adolescence and 18 years of age is a very sensitive age, in which a lot of transitions happen in individual’s life. Soon, there will be change from School to College, advices from various set of people on what to study, where to study etc, family pressure for good result which will lead to good career. There is a lot of excitement to do something different and show the power of self to the world. Virtual freedom and negative outcome do not show any significant difference with respect to age.

Table 2: Table showing significance difference on Age and SNSA Components

	AGE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value
Impulsivity	15	22	36.68	8.266	5.801**



	16	79	42.01	8.774	
	17	89	44.36	8.952	
	18	10	47.90	8.812	
Virtual Freedom	15	22	26.41	3.850	0.413
	16	79	25.78	3.529	
	17	89	25.88	3.229	
	18	10	25.00	3.197	
Negative Outcome	15	22	11.23	2.742	0.384
	16	79	11.06	3.123	
	17	89	11.42	3.029	
	18	10	10.50	2.635	

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

The statistical analysis also showed that the demographic variable gender does not play any significant role on levels of Social Networking addiction.

Demographic Variables and Personality Traits:

There has been no significant difference between the various age groups on personality traits. Below is the table that shows significant difference between gender and personality traits:

Table 3: Table showing significant difference between gender and Personality Traits

	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	't' Value
Extraversion	Boys	93	26.12	3.75	0.585
	Girls	107	26.45	4.17	
Agreeableness	Boys	93	31.85	4.23	2.483*
	Girls	107	30.22	4.91	
Conscientiousness	Boys	93	29.80	4.29	1.807
	Girls	107	29.11	4.55	
Neuroticism	Boys	93	22.87	4.55	-3.082**
	Girls	107	24.88	4.63	
Openness	Boys	93	35.16	5.09	2.508*
	Girls	107	33.36	5.06	

*p<0.05 **p<0.01

It is observed that boys show more agreeableness and women show more openness. They are more accommodative and the women are frank when it comes to agreeableness. It is again the women who showed significant negative correlation on neuroticism which means they are more balanced emotionally than men.

Correlation between Happiness and Personality Traits:

The results obtained through correlation between Happiness scores and personality traits reveals that happiness and extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively correlated with one another and negatively correlated with neuroticism. The happier a person is, more he would interact with people and multiply his joy, would oblige with his fellow beings and also be more aware of what he or she is doing. There is however, no correlation found between openness and happiness.

Demographic Variables and Happiness:

On Happiness, there is no significant difference spotted in the demographic variables of age and gender.

Table 4: Table showing correlation between Happiness and the various Personality Traits



Dimension	r
Extraversion	0.304**
Agreeableness	0.204**
Conscientiousness	0.318**
Neuroticism	-0.261**
Openness	0.110

Extraversion indicates how outgoing and social a person is. They enjoy being with people, participating in social gatherings, and are full of energy. Individuals have a tendency to seek out the company and stimulation of other people. They enjoy engaging with the external world. These individuals thrive on excitement, and are enthusiastic, action-oriented people. They like to be the centre of attention in groups. Agreeableness is the personality trait that is indicative of behaviour to suit or adapt according to others present around the individual. Conscientiousness is the personality trait of being careful, or vigilant. Conscientiousness implies a desire to do a task well, and to take obligations to others seriously. Conscientious people tend to be efficient and organized. They exhibit a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement; they display planned behaviour, hence lead to sense of

satisfaction in whatever task they perform and eventually lead to happiness.

Correlation between Happiness and Social Networking Sites Addiction:

There exists a significant relationship between impulsivity, virtual freedom and negative outcome with Happiness. Negative Outcome refers to undesirable consequences from the use of SNS. Individuals see their general offline life being affected by the use of SNS and it leads to unhappiness within them. Happier the people are, more impulsive they become and more freely they behave on the social networking sites without bothering about the consequences of their social networking activities.

Table 5: Table showing correlation between Happiness & the aspects of SNS Addiction

Dimension	r
Impulsivity	0.304**
Virtual Freedom	0.204**
Negative Outcome	0.318**

Correlation between Personality traits and SNA Components

The results in the table below show that there is a significant negative correlation found between conscientious trait and impulsivity and negative outcome. These adolescents would have control over their impulses and they have the ability to achieve their goals and hence decrease the chances of becoming addicted. More conscientiousness leads to

lesser impulsivity and lesser negative outcomes. Positive correlation between the personality trait neuroticism and impulsivity, virtual freedom and negative outcome is only indicative of the fact that people who are emotionally unstable behave in an impulsive manner, and generally get into undesirable consequences from the use of these sites. Neuroticism is positively correlated with the aspects of social networking addiction dimensions. Greater neuroticism translates into increased chances of being hooked on to the social media sites.

Table 6: Table showing Correlation between Personality traits and SNA Components



	Impulsivity	Virtual Freedom	Negative Outcome
Extraversion	.079	-.057	-.093
Agreeableness	-.002	.135	-.165
Conscientiousness	-.181*	.068	-.293**
Openness	.146*	.051	.016
Neuroticism	.231**	.139*	.304**

CONCLUSION

Social media sites enable people to connect with each other no matter on which continent or in which time zone they reside. Although it allows people to stay in touch with loved ones around the world it is taking over the world, as an estimated 2 billion people around the globe use social networking sites. The average Student in sample has five social media accounts and must be spending half an hour to one hour a day browsing their networks. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are among the most popular social media sites.

We are constantly in the rat race, trying to post the best videos, photos, and status updates to receive the most likes, follows, or comments. However, underneath the social media craze, we are actually trying to brag and showcase our best moments of our lives even when we may be living in misery. We live in a world where we constantly compare our lives to others and oftentimes do not take time to recognize our triggers, defeats, challenges, accomplishments, and endeavors because we are so busy trying to present ourselves in the best form possible. We don't take a moment to unwind, take a deep breath, and disconnect from the world. Rarely do people post their daily struggles on their social media accounts, partially because we are driven by society to showcase the best parts of our lives and not our struggles. The downside is that technology has changed today's relationships and, as a result, face-to-face interpersonal skills are disappearing among people.

This research study has been set out with an aim to find out the relation between the personality, happiness and social media addiction. The study was conducted on a sample of 200 respondents who belonged to adolescent of age group of 15-18. The respondents were administered the Social Media Addiction Scale, Happiness Scale and Big Five Personality to arrive at the purpose of the study.

Below are the major findings that the research has arrived at:

- 18 year old adolescents showed more impulsivity than the rest of the sample.
- Boys showed more agreeableness and girls showed negative on the neuroticism trait. Boys too showed more openness when compared to girls.
- There is a positive correlation found between happiness scores and the various personality traits, and also the various aspects of social networking sites addiction.

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