

Social Networking Sites Addiction and Mental Health: A comparative study on college-going Adult Learners

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Abstract:

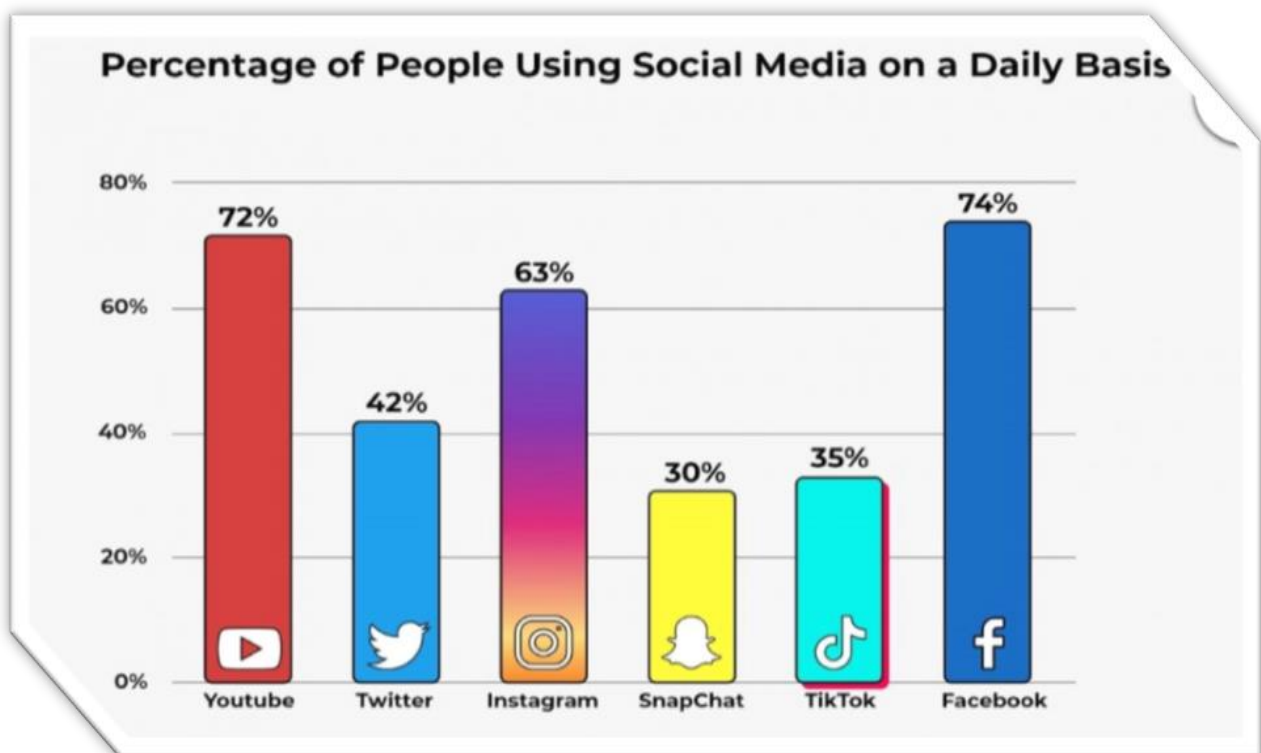
In spite of the fact that working on Social Networking Sites (SNS) like YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook (SNSs) etc., facilitate relationships, provide a sense of belonging, offer recognition, create opportunities for self-expression, personal fulfilment, emotional wellbeing and learning, excessive use of these sites can lead to social networking addiction called Behavioral addiction, particularly among college students. Since College years are a critical period of high engagement with these platforms, often resulting in excessive screen time, this overuse can have detrimental effects on mental health, contributing to issues like anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Recognizing the significant influence of SNS addiction on students' mental health, the team of authors selected this research problem keeping the following objectives in concentration. 1) To identify the college-going social networking sites addicted learners, and 2) To compare Science, Arts, and Commerce college-going social networking sites addicted learners on Mental Health. The investigator employed a descriptive research methodology to interpret the results of the study, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Multistage random sampling technique was applied to select the sample for the study, ensuring a diverse and representative group of participants. After Using the SNS addiction scale, 600 college-going addicted learners were identified based on their dependency on SNSs, The findings reveal that there is no significant mean difference between science, arts and commerce college-going SNS addicted learners on mental health status.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Social Networking Sites Addiction, Mental Health, Internet Addiction.

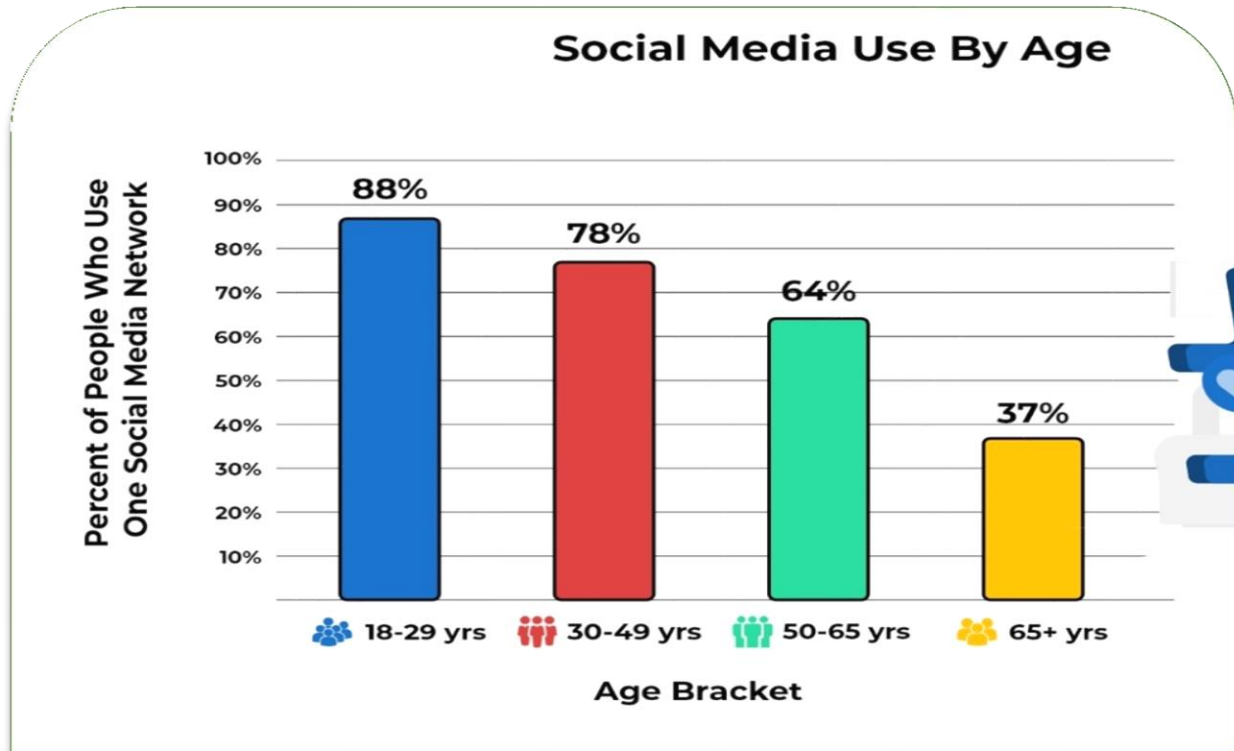
1. Introduction

Growing scientific evidence suggest that excessive use of social networking sites (SNS) may lead to symptoms traditionally associated with substance-related addictions, such as salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, relapse, and conflict. While social networking can enhance personal growth and well-being when used in moderation, excessive use often results in detrimental effects. Social networking sites addiction hinders with fulfilling both basic and higher-level needs, negatively impacting health, safety, relationships, self-esteem, and personal development. At the physiological level, addiction to social

media leads to neglect of basic needs, such as poor sleep, lack of exercise, and unhealthy eating habits, ultimately causing physical health issues. In terms of safety, constant exposure to negative content, online conflicts and cyberbullying increases stress and anxiety, undermining a sense of security and stability. Regarding love and belongingness, social networking addiction can foster superficial relationships while eroding meaningful connections, leading to loneliness and social isolation. The desire for social validation on these platforms often fuels unhealthy comparisons, which harms esteem needs, leaving individuals feeling inadequate and constantly seeking approval through likes, comments, and followers. Finally, addiction to social media can hinder self-actualization by diverting time and energy away from personal growth, meaningful goals, and real-life achievements, as users focus instead on gaining external validation.



The above figure clarifies social networking usage across different platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and others, providing an insightful look into user trends. The data shows that Facebook leads the way with the highest user base, with 74% of individuals using the platform, followed by YouTube at 72%. These two platforms are the most widely used, serving a wide variety of purposes like; entertainment, communication, education and networking. Despite the many benefits these platforms do offer, research has raised concerns about the negative impact of excessive time spent on social media. Studies do show that overuse can lead to a range of problems, including sleep disturbances, and mental health issues like; anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The above data has prompted researchers to explore the growing issue of excessive use of social networking platforms, particularly on specific populations, such as college students. So, there is a pressing need to address these growing concerns on this sensitive population.



The statistics regarding social networking usage among college-age students are quite alarming. As the above figure clarifies it that 88% of social networking site users are between the ages of 18 and 29. Students are using social networking platforms for a variety of reasons, which can be beneficial to their academic life but excessive use of these sites is leading to social networking addiction, which has its negative effects. Since College life is crucial for education and personal development of students, the researchers aimed to identify college students who may be addicted to social networking sites based on their level of dependence on SNS and to compare the mental health aspects of these addicted students across different academic streams, to better understand the impact of social media addiction on their well-being. With this background, the researchers have taken the initiative to **Compare College going adult Social Networking Sites (SNSs) Addictive learners on Mental Health**. Hence, the proposed problem for the present investigation reads as:

A Comparative Study on Mental Health of College going Social Networking Sites SNSs Addictive learners.

Theoretical framework of the study:

The theoretical framework of social networking sites addiction and its impact on mental health is rooted in several psychological and sociological theories that explain both the development of addiction to social networking sites and its consequences on mental well-being. One key theory is the **Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)** which highlights that social networking sites users become addicted because SNS platforms continually meet their personal and social needs. These platforms provide rewards such as social validation, peer feedback, and entertainment, which can lead users to spend more and more

time on SNS and get engaged in behavior addiction. Similarly, **Social Comparison Theory** suggests that individuals often compare themselves to others on social networking, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem, thereby increasing the tendency for compulsive use. The **Behavioural Addiction Model** views SNS addiction as a form of behavioural addiction, similar to gambling or video game addiction, where excessive use leads to negative consequences but is continuously reinforced by rewards. SNS platforms use features like likes, comments, notifications, and social approval to create reinforcement loops, which activate the brain's reward system. These intermittent rewards lead to habitual and compulsive behaviour, as users are conditioned to seek these positive feedbacks. Other theories, such as **Attachment Theory** and **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)**, emphasize how emotional needs and social pressures drive individuals to seek constant online determination, while **The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)** explains how attitudes, social norms, and perceived control over social media use can influence addiction. The mentioned theories help in understanding how and why social media addiction occurs.

The impact of social networking addiction on mental health is profound, as it can contribute to various psychological issues. Addiction to social media has been linked to increased **anxiety and depression**, **sleep disturbances**, which in turn affect overall mental health and well-being. Social media addiction can also result in **decreased social skills**, as users increasingly rely on online interactions instead of engaging in face-to-face communication, contributing to feelings of isolation. The theoretical frameworks emphasize the complex relationship between social networking addiction and mental health, highlighting the need for interventions that balance the benefits of social networking sites with the potential psychological risks associated with excessive use.

Review of literature:

Alka (2020), carried out a study on “Impact of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of the students with special reference to Universities of Indoor”. From the results, it was revealed that academic performance and purpose of using social networking have positive correlation with each other. The other result of the study revealed that social networking sites are potent tool to enhance the learning performance but over-use of it will promote poor academic achievement.

Bhattacherge (2018), conducted a study on “Usage of online Social Networking Sites among school students of Siliguri, West Bengal, India”. The primary objective of this research was to find the pattern of school students’ SNS and its influence on their academic performance. A pretested and predesigned questionnaire was self administrated anonymously by 388 randomly selected students of an English medium school situated in metropolitan city of Siliguri in West Bengal. Results of the study declared that 338(87.17%) students used SNS and spent an increased amount of time on these networks and addiction was seen in (70.07%) students.

Ghalawat Suman (2017), conducted a study on “A study of college students using Social Networking Sites and their relationship with Demographic Profile”. The study was conducted to attain mainly two objectives; first to identify the factors related with the services of SNS among students and secondly to determine the relationship between demographic variables and factors influencing overall satisfaction with the services of SNS among students. Students put a lot of time on these sites for searching information for

finding jobs, career opportunities, 38 finding literature and uploading and downloading videos. ANOVA analysis disclosed that demographic variables had significant relationship with these factors.

A study was carried on “Internet Addiction and Mental Health among the students of Arts, Commerce and Science Faculty” by **Geeta K (2018)**, The main purpose of the research was to investigate, Internet Addiction and Mental Health among the Students of Arts, Commerce and Science Faculty. The total sample consisted of 720 students, which included 240 from Arts, 240 from Commerce and another 240 from science faculty students. The study consisted of the sample ranging between the age group of 17-23. The study identified addicted college going student with the help of internet addiction test.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale for the study “**Social Networking Sites Addiction and Mental Health: A Comparative study on College-going Adult Learners**” is rooted in the growing concern over the impact of social networking addiction, particularly among college students. With the rise of social networking platforms, excessive use has become a pervasive issue, leading to negative consequences on academic performance, social interactions, and overall mental well-being. College-going students, in particular, are at a critical stage of personal and academic development, where studies, work, and social commitments are very high. The study aims to examine how social networking addiction influences mental health in this unique group of adult learners, considering that adult students may face different challenges compared to their younger counterparts. By exploring these differences, the research seeks to highlight how addiction manifests differently across various academic disciplines, particularly Science, Arts, and Commerce, each of which comes with its own set of academic pressures, social dynamics, and lifestyle factors.

Studies highlight the alarming statistics, out of the world’s total population of 8.7 billion, over 5.17 billion are users of social networking sites (SNS), and approximately 210 million people worldwide suffer from SNS addiction. In India, college-age students (18 to 24 years old) are particularly vulnerable, with 31% of them being addicted to social networking sites. This highlights the need for research focused on identifying and understanding the extent of addiction among college students, who are in a critical phase of personal and academic development. Furthermore, the study addresses the growing concern of mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and stress, which are linked to excessive use of social media. While there is a body of research examining social media addiction and its effects, limited studies focus on comparing students from different academic streams. This study aims to fill that gap by providing a comparative analysis that considers how addiction affects students from diverse fields of study. The findings would have practical implications, offering valuable insights for colleges, educators, and mental health professionals. By understanding the specific needs of students in each discipline, targeted interventions could be developed, such as tailored counselling programs, awareness campaigns, and digital literacy initiatives. Ultimately, this research would aim to inform strategies that help manage and reduce the detrimental effects of social networking addiction, leading to better mental health and well-being for college-going adult learners.

Operation Definitions of the Terms and Variables

Social networking Addiction:

Social Networking Addiction is a behavioral addiction marked by an excessive focus on social networking sites (YouTube, Face book, etc.), devoting so much time and energy to these sites that it impairs other important life areas. In this study, the variable has been measured using scores obtained from Social Networking Addiction Scale developed by Shahnawaz & Rehman (2020).

Mental Health:

Mental health is a state of cognitive, emotional and social well-being of an individual. The variable (Mental Health) has been measured using scores obtained from Mental Health Battery developed by Singha and Sengupta (Revised-2019).

Delimitation of the study

The study is delimited to Government Degree College SNSs addicted learners of the Kashmir valley. Furthermore, the study is delimited to the 2nd and 4th semester students only.

Objectives of the study:

The following objectives were formulated for the present study.

1. To identify the college-going social networking sites addicted learners.
2. To compare Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNSs addicted learners on Mental health. (Factor wise and composite score)

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Emotional Sstability dimension of mental health.
2. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Overall Adjustment dimension of mental health.
3. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Autonomy dimension of mental health.
4. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Self-Concept dimension of mental health.
5. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Ssecurity-Insecurity dimension of mental health.
6. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Iintelligence dimension of mental health.

7. There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Composite score of mental health.

Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature, in which Multistage simple random sampling was used as a technique of data collection.

1. Population

The population of the study includes Government degree college students addicted to social networking sites who are studying in various degree colleges across the south, north, and central regions of the Kashmir Valley.

2. Sample

The sample for the present study consists of 600 students identified as being addicted to social networking sites (SNS) from various colleges across the Kashmir Valley. These students were selected through a careful process of identification based on their usage patterns and the extent of their SNS dependency.

3. Sampling process

In the sample process, the investigator used a multistage sampling technique to identify college-going students addicted to social networking sites (SNS) in the Kashmir Valley. There are ten districts in Kashmir divided into three regions i.e. three to North, three to Central and four to South Kashmir. The entire sampling process included the following stages:

1st Stage: Selection of Districts

The investigator selected six districts, two from each region i.e. North, Central and South Kashmir by applying random sampling technique. This ensured that the sample was geographically diverse and represented different areas of the Kashmir Valley.

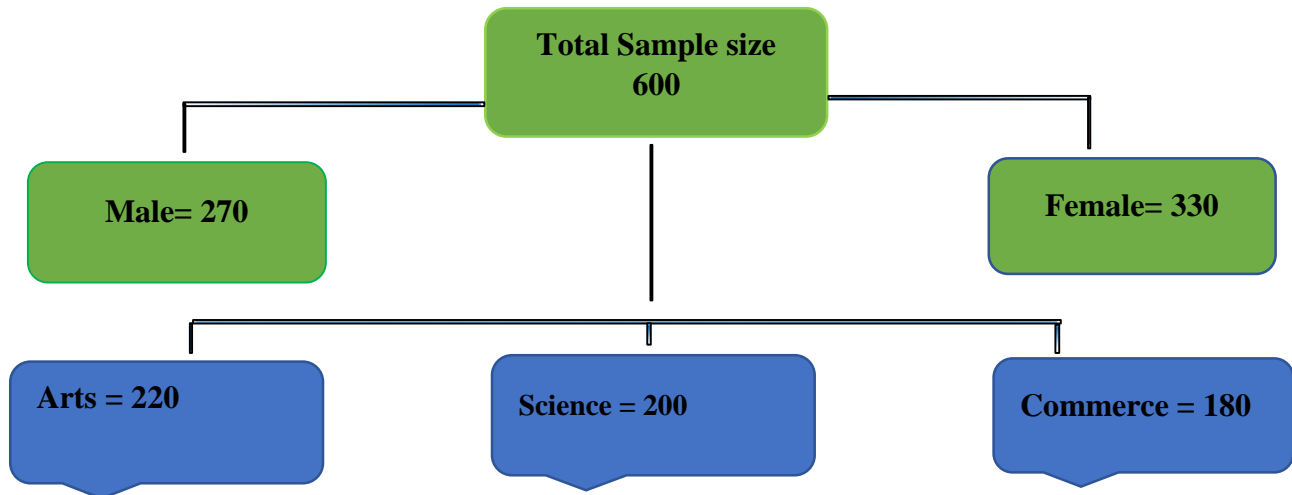
2nd Stage: Selection of Colleges

In the second stage, the investigator randomly selected 12 colleges, two colleges from each of the six selected districts by using a simple random sampling technique. This step ensured that the sample included students from various colleges across different districts, promoting the representativeness of the sample.

3rd Stage: Identification of Social Networking Sites Addicts

The third stage involved administering the Social Networking Addiction Scale, developed by Shahnawaz and Rehman, to a total of 1,420 students from the 2nd and 4th semesters across the selected colleges by using simple random sampling technique. The scale was designed to assess the extent of SNS addiction by evaluating students' social networking usage patterns, the time spent on social networking sites, and the impact on their academic and personal lives. Based on the results, 600 students who exhibited signs of SNS addiction were identified.

4. Distribution of the Sample: The Distribution of the sample can be further understand with the help of Flow Chat:



5. Tools for the present Study

A. The present study used Social Networking Addiction scale developed by Shahnawaz and Rehman (2020). The scale consists of 21 items divided into six dimensions, which include Salience, Mood-Modification, Tolerance, Withdrawal, Relapse and Conflict.

B. The present study used Mental Heath scale developed by Singha and Sengupta (Revised-2019). It has total 130 items divided into six dimensions, which include Emotional Stability, Over-All adjustment, Autonomy, Security-insecurity, Self-concept and Intelligence.

6. Statistical Techniques Employed:

Analysis of data means to make new raw data meaningful or to draw some results from the data after proper treatment is provided. The null hypotheses so framed are tested with the help of analysis of data so as to obtain some significant results. In this study, Statistical analysis of data would be done by SPSS Software using:

1) Skewness and Kurtosis 2) Mean, 3) SD and 4) One-way ANOVA

Analysis and Discussion of the Data

I. Normal Distribution of the data

Table No. 01: Showing normal distribution of the Mental Health variable.

N	Mean	Median	S.D	S.E of Mean	z- value of Skewness	z- value of Kurtosis	Z- Standard
600	70.84	71.15	10.108	.413	-2.44	-0.52	±2.58

The above table (**No.01**) shows the mean and median values for the variables of mental health among college SNS addicted learners and the values were found to be quite close to each other. The mean and median was 70.84 and 71.15 respectively, suggesting a distribution that is relatively symmetrical. Moreover, results of the table indicates that the values of Skewness and Kurtosis fell within the range of normality. The description of the normality of the data is further presented in the Histogram (**Fig. No. 01**).

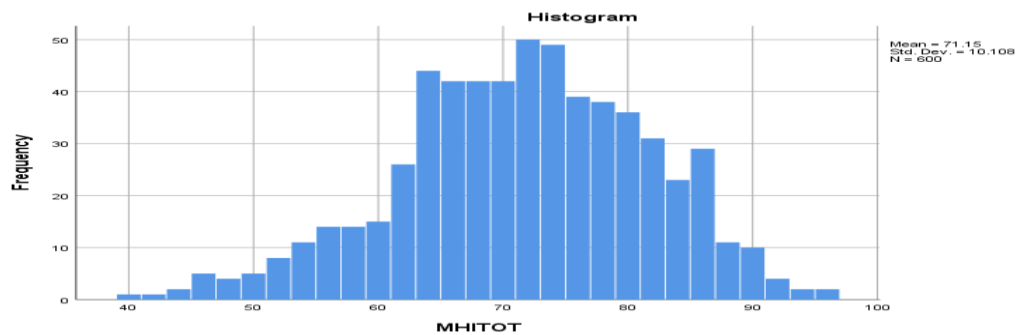
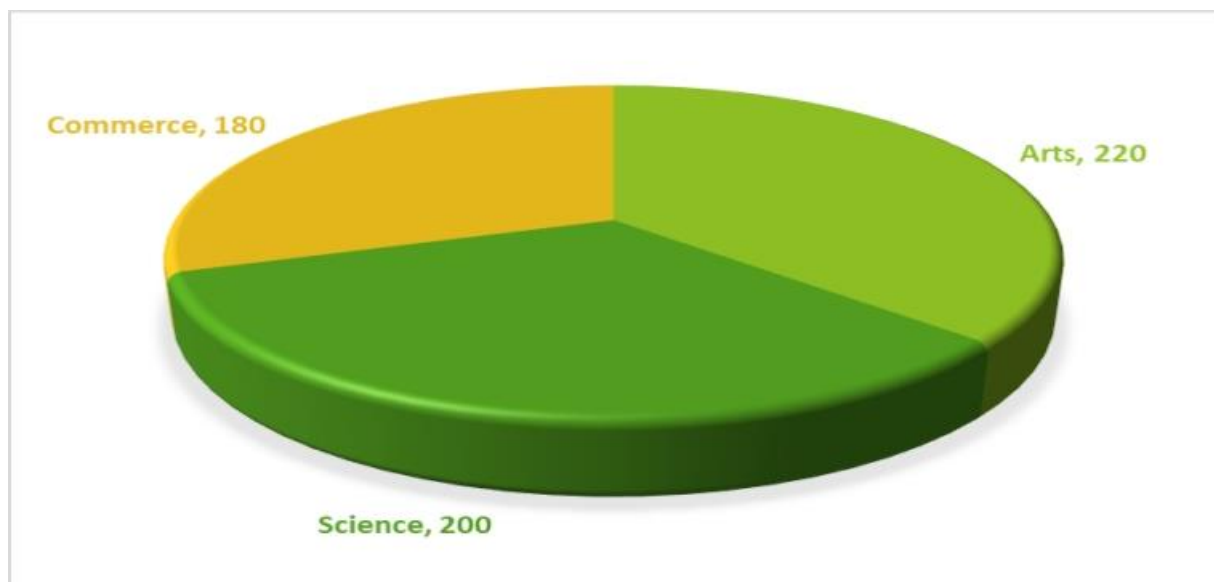


Fig. No. 01

Gender	N	Percentage
Arts	220	36%
Science	200	33.33%
Commerce	180	30%
Total	600	100%

Table No. 2: Showing the percentage-wise distribution of the overall sample among college-going students addicted to SNS.

The above (**Table No. 02**), shows the percentage-wise distribution of the overall (**600**) sample of students (**Stream-wise**) addicted to SNS. The table reveals that 36% (**220**) of students belong to Arts, 33.33% (**200**) to Science and 30% (**180**) fall under the Commerce category. The results are further presented in the Bar-diagram (**Fig. 02**).



II. Comparative Analysis

**Table No. 03: Showing the Significance difference of Mean Scores between Science, Commerce and Arts College-going Adult Learners Addicted to SNS on Mental Health.
(Dimension and Composite score)**

<i>Dimensions of Mental Health</i>	<i>Subject streams</i>										
	<i>Arts</i>			<i>Science</i>			<i>Commerce</i>			<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Emotional Stability</i>	220	7.34	1.997	200	7.65	2.359	180	7.54	2.312	1.020	.361
<i>Over-All Adjustment</i>	220	22.01	4.339	200	22.32	8.761	180	21.88	4.391	.261	.71
<i>Autonomy</i>	220	9.20	2.484	200	9.20	2.63	180	8.78	2.698	1.61	.20
<i>Security-Insecurity</i>	220	8.25	2.371	200	8.50	6.027	180	7.76	2.39	1.679	.423
<i>Self-concept</i>	220	8.95	2.489	200	8.57	2.627	180	8.61	2.381	1.457	.234
<i>Intelligence</i>	220	15.17	4.687	200	15.89	4.964	180	16.16	5.21	2.196	.112
<i>Composite score</i>	220	70.49	9.918	200	71.21	10.59	180	70.87	10.67	.262	.770

Acronyms: SNS= Social Networking Sites

The table No. 03, shows that the calculated value of F is **1.020**, which is lower than the tabulated value of F (**3.01**) at **0.05** level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores show that science (**M=7.65**) and commerce (**7.54**) students have more Emotional Stability than arts students (**7.34**) but the difference could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce College-going SNS addicted students on the Emotional Stability dimension of mental health at college level. Based on the above data, the hypothesis No. 01 which reads as “**There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Emotional Sstability dimension of mental health status**”, stands accepted.

The table No. 03, shows a mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Over-All Adjustment dimension of mental health. The calculated value is **.261**, which is lower than the tabulated value (**3.01**) at 0.05 level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores show that science (**M=22.32**) and arts (**22.1**) students have more Over-all adjustment than

commerce students (**21.88**) but this difference could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce addicted students on the Over-All adjustment dimension of mental health at college level. Based on the above data, the hypothesis No. 02 which reads as, **“There would be no significant difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Over-all Adjustment dimension of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

The table **No. 03**, shows a mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Autonomy dimension of mental health. The obtained F-value (**1.61**) is lower than the tabulated F-value (**3.01**) at **0.05** level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores show that arts (**9.20**) and science students (**9.20**) have slightly higher level of Over-All adjustment than commerce students (**8.78**) but the difference could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce SNS addicted students on the Autonomy dimension of mental health. Based on the above information the hypothesis No. 03 which reads as, **“There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Autonomous dimension of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

A One-Way Analysis of Variances (**Table No. 03**) was conducted to determine the the mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Security-Insecurity dimension of Mental health. The calculated F-value is **1.679**, which is lower than the tabulated of F-value i.e **3.01** at **0.05** level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores indicate that Science (**M= 8.50**) and Arts (**8.25**) Students have slightly higher level of loneliness than commerce students (**7.76**) but could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce SNS addicted students on the Security-Insecurity dimension of mental health at college level. Based on the above information the hypothesis No. 04 which reads as, **“There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on security-insecurity dimension of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

The above table (**Table. No. 03**) shows the mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Self-Concept dimension of mental health. It can be observed that the calculated value of F is **1.457**, which is lower than the tabulated value (**3.01**) at a **0.05** level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores show that arts (**M= 8.95**) and commerce (**M=8.61**) students have slightly higher level of Self-Concept level than science students (**8.57**) but could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce SNS addicted students on the Self-Concept dimension of mental health. Based on the above information the hypothesis No. 05 which reads as, **“There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on self-concept dimension of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

The Table **No. 03**, shows a mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Intelligence dimension of mental health. It can be seen that the obtained F-value (**2.196**) is lower than the tabulated F-value (**3.01**) at a **5%** level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, mean scores show that commerce (**15.89**) and science students (**15.89**) have more general mental ability than Arts students (**8.78**) but the difference could not arrive at any level of significance. Thus, the above

results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce SNS addicted students on the Intelligence dimension of mental health at college level. Based on the above information the hypothesis No. 06 which reads as, **“There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on Intelligence dimension of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

The table **No. 03**, reveals a mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going students addicted to SNS on the Composite score of mental health. It was observed that the obtained F-value (.262) is lower than the tabulated F-value (3.01) at 0.05 level of significance ($p > 0.05$). The above results do not show any significant mean difference between Arts, Sciences and Commerce SNS addicted students on the Composite score of mental health. Based on the above information the hypothesis No. 07 which reads as, **“There would be no significant mean difference between Arts, Science and Commerce College-going SNS addicted learners on composite score of mental health status”**, stand accepted.

The above results suggest that SNS addicted students across all three streams (Arts, Science and Commerce) exhibit similar levels of emotional stability, self-concept, autonomy, security-insecurity, self-concept and intelligence status. One of the main reasons for the similarity in mental health status among students from different streams (Arts, Science, and Commerce) is that all students, regardless of their academic focus, are typically part of the same educational system. In this shared system, they encounter similar stresses, such as academic pressure, exams, and social challenges. The school environment, which includes support systems like teachers, counsellors, and extracurricular activities, plays a crucial role in shaping students' mental health. These support systems help provide a uniform effect on emotional stability and coping abilities, regardless of the stream a student belongs to. Additionally, students across all streams are taught similar modern technologies and educational approaches, without any discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, or ability. Schools offer a relatively equal educational experience, ensuring that all students have access to the same resources and opportunities, which contributes to similar mental health outcomes among them. The findings of **Prabodhan Bhagirath Kalamb (2023)** study are in line with the present findings that there exists no significant mean difference between arts, science and commerce students on all the dimensions of mental health. The findings of present investigation are also similar with the results of study conducted by **Maryam Farhang (2015)** found that streams does not effect on mental health status of students as science and arts stream students show similar level of mental health status.

Findings

1. The data on the variable of mental health appears to be normally distributed, as evidenced by the fact that the mean and median are close to each other. This suggests that the data is symmetrically distributed. Furthermore, the Z-scores for Skewness and Kurtosis fall within the range of ± 2.58 which further supports the assumption of normality.

2. It has been observed that **36%**(220) of students addicted to social networking sites (SNS) belong to the Arts stream, while **33.33%**(200) belong to the Science stream and **30%**(180) belong to the Commerce stream. This indicates that Arts students have the highest proportion of SNS addiction, followed by Science and Commerce students.

1. It was revealed from the findings of the study that there is no significant mean difference between arts, science and commerce college-going SNS addicted learners on “Emotional Stability, Over-all adjustment, Autonomy and security-insecurity” dimensions of mental health.
2. No significant mean difference has been found between arts, science and commerce college-going SNS addicted learners on “Self-Concept, Intelligence and Composite score” dimension of mental health.

Educational Implications: Educational Programs:

- Schools and universities should implement educational programs that teach students how to use social networking sites responsibly. These programs can explain the mental health effects of overuse, the risks of comparing themselves to others on social networking sites, and the need for taking breaks from digital devices.
- **Mental Health Awareness and Support Services:** Institutions should provide accessible mental health services, including counselling and peer support groups, specifically focused on students with SNS addiction. It's important to offer a safe space for students to discuss their problems and seek guidance.
- **Mental Health Considerations:** The results shows that arts students have higher level of SNS addiction than science and commerce. This addiction level may be one of the causes for increased levels of anxiety, depression, or lower self-esteem, especially among young people. Therefore, Educational institutions may need to implement different mental health programs at college level that promote mental well-being and responsible social networking use, with a specific focus on Arts students.
- **Promote Offline Engagement and Real-Life Interaction:** Encouraging activities that promote real-world engagement, such as group activities, sports, or group projects, can reduce dependency on online platforms. These activities provide opportunities for students to build self-esteem and social connections away from the pressures of social media.
- **Need for Digital Literacy Programs:** As it was seen that all streams (arts, science and commerce) of students were addicted to SNS addiction, therefore, educational programs need to be organized aimed at improving digital literacy. These programs would educate students about the potential negative effects of excessive social media use and help them develop healthier online habits.
- **Screen time:** This study does encourage teachers to educate students on the importance of balanced screen time and encourage healthy technological habits, like limiting social networking use during study hours.

Conclusion:

The findings of this study suggest a clear link between social networking site addiction and various mental health issues among college-going adult learners. It appears that those who exhibit addictive behaviours towards social media, experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. Moreover, students who are addicted to social networking sites often report disrupted sleep patterns, decreased academic engagement, and difficulty focusing, which are all factors that can contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Several factors may contribute to social networking addiction among college-going adult learners. The study indicates that peer influence, the need for social validation, and the constant availability of information and entertainment on social networking platforms are key drivers. Additionally, for adult

learners who may be balancing academic responsibilities with work or family obligations, social media may provide an escape from daily stressors. The need for constant connectivity and the desire for approval through likes, comments, and shares may also contribute to the compulsive use of these platforms.

In conclusion, the discussion highlights the significant mental health risks associated with social networking site addiction among college-going adult learners. The study suggests that while social media can offer valuable opportunities for connection and information, its excessive use can lead to negative mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Addressing these issues requires greater awareness, more effective intervention strategies, and a balanced approach to social media use. Educational institutions must play a key role in promoting mental well-being and helping students develop healthier online habits.

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