

Social Networking Usage, Psychological Distress and Happiness among Young Adults during COVID 19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Background: The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak has wreaked havoc throughout the world, impacting millions of people physically and mentally. Interpersonal connections are confined to social networks during the pandemic. However, there has been a dearth of research focusing on social networking usage during COVID-19 in particular. As a result, it is currently unclear whether and how utilizing social networks during epidemic is linked to mental health. The present paper examines the relationship between social networking usage among youngsters and its impact, like the psychological distress and happiness during the COVID-19 epidemic. Furthermore, because young adults are frequent users of social media, it is important to study the effects of social networking usage in this age group.

Methodology: An online survey of a sample of 316 young adults was carried out using Social Networking Sites Usage and Needs Scale, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS -21) and Oxford Happiness Scale.

Results: The results show that females were happier than males. Further, the number of social networks used was negatively correlated with happiness. Personal integrative needs were found to be a positive predictor of psychological distress. The implications of the findings are elaborately discussed.

Conclusions:

Keywords: Social networking, psychological distress, happiness, young adults

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INTRODUCTION

Social networks have become a worldwide phenomenon, attracting a large demographic from all over the world with various ages, races, and education levels. Social Networking Sites (SNS) have recently grown in popularity as a result of emerging technology (mobile, tablet, notebook) and the internet [1]. A social media website is a virtual platform. This forum enables people to make new contacts, improve friendly relationships with others and exchange information [2]. Social media has developed to reinforce interpersonal relations, but as the years passed, it has brought about fewer human interactions because of its quick access [3]. The use of social media has increased the tendency of individuals to interact with others through online mode. People move their identity to virtual networks by posting personal information, sharing photographs, and specifying their interests. These interactions indicate the need for making friends in online networks [4].

The globe has shrunk into a smaller interactive space because of the compression of time and space due to the confluence of social media [5]. Globally, people can interact with each other within seconds by sending and receiving messages [6]. Social networks can serve various purposes like connecting with others, knowledge sharing, shop online and publish content online through sites like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Social networking sites enable the youth to make social capital, provide sources for social interactions, help in keeping in touch with friends and facilitate frequently meeting the friends [7-10]. Youth

have also gained a commendable level of knowledge about current affairs through social media, and they had better connectivity with the internet based on a high-speed connection [11].

Social networks widely used by adolescents, young adults, and people above 30 years include Myspace and Facebook [12]. Myspace was the first social network introduced in 2003, which was a blogging platform where people can easily share music and videos. YouTube was the next social network introduced in the same year that enabled individuals to share videos online. Facebook followed this, which is now the most popularly used social network [1]. Social media and social network usage have been multiplying within the world year by year. The largest and most popular social network is Facebook, with 2.8 billion people users every month. The famous SNSs dominating in India are Facebook with 53% users followed by WhatsApp 44%, Google + 40%, Twitter 34% and LinkedIn 29%. Among the Indian social network users, 68% of users fall under the age group of 13 to 25 [13]. There is an upward trend in the number of individuals moving along with the digital era, and 1 out of 4 people use social networks globally. Such drastic growth has interacted with people's needs and motivation [6]. There are five interrelated dimensions of social networking sites, namely diversion needs, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integration needs and social integration needs [14]. Social Network Sites have revolutionized people's communication methods [15] and have become a part of people's culture [16].

Among 1.36 billion people in India, 70% of the people are active social media users. By the end of 2018, the number of social media users in India was 326.1 million, and by the end of 2019, it is estimated to grow to 351.4 million [17]. Around 70% of young adults spend more than 5 hours on social media, and their internet access is primarily desktop-based (41%), 36% use laptops and 27 % use smartphones.

Even though social networks provide many positive things like sharing information, exchanging ideas, communicating with people all over the world, it has certain negative impacts too. The most prominent negative impact of social media is addiction, which means people tend to constantly check Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other different social media updates [18].

The population which is generally stricken by social media is college students and young adults. The students may display decreased performance because they struggle to multi-task, checking social websites frequently. Their capacity to concentrate on their academics has reduced due to the distractions caused by Facebook, YouTube, or other social media [19]. Youngsters must create a balance between the use of SNS and studies. Students and young adults should set aside time for social network use and not dedicate any of their remaining time to it [20].

The literature shows that with the advent of technology and social networks, the number of studies regarding human psychology has increased [4, 21-22]. According to recent databases, articles on internet use, social media and social network use are the most read and reviewed [23-25]. Daily users were able to handle stressful situations better compared with nondaily users. The daily users were more satisfied with people, how they handle the issues and their accomplishments in life [26]. Youth prefers spending an excessive amount of time on social networks with a mean of more than two hours daily, which makes them procrastinate in their regular work. They hesitate to go for gatherings because the social networks enable them to be more involved in their interested activities [27].

A few studies [28-29] have highlighted that people often utilized online social networks to connect and reconnect with their friends and members of the family and that they have a platform for reconnecting with lost friends, maintaining existing networks and sharing knowledge and opinions. Social media should be employed in a limited way without getting obsessed with it [30]. The spread of social networks might be associated with a specific positive affective state on their lifestyle experienced by users once they use their online social networks [31]. When the users have control over the social media platform, they can focus more effectively on the particular activities they want to complete on it. The perceived utility of the social networking tool contributes to a satisfying experience on the website [32].

The use of the internet, especially social networking sites (SNS), provides individuals more independence in terms of communication and socializing, and a positive association between social network usage and well-being is reported [33-34]. Several studies have linked Facebook usage to positive outcomes, such as satisfying the users' desires for feelings of self-esteem and self-integrity [35], improving the nature and quality of current friendships [36], and the sense of greater subjective well-being [37]. People who use Facebook frequently are

more likely to feel connected and happy [38]. Further, it was found that people with high levels of Facebook activity reported lower levels of depression [39].

On the other hand, excessive use of social media, also known as Internet addiction, has been linked to elevated levels of depressive symptoms [40-41]. It has been found that there is a link between more Facebook usage and a decline in life satisfaction. The use of the internet disrupts social relations and, at the same time, isolates people from society. Individuals cut off their real relationship with the surrounding due to social networks and participate in virtual relationships, which will have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of the person [42].

Loneliness could be a significant contributor to Facebook use. The more people felt lonely, the more they used Facebook [15]. A significant negative relationship is found between social networking and mental health. Increased social media use ends up in deteriorated mental health. The most active social media users had a predominantly high risk for developing mental health issues [43]. Social networking usage influences psychological attitudes and mental health. Social media had caused aggression, egoism, inflated self-assurance, and skewed perceptions among the youth [44].

Need for the study

Social Network Sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are deeply ingrained into the daily lives of individuals, especially among young adults. They are the major users of social networking sites and have become an integral part of their lives. Social networks can be compared to a double-edged sword as they can be used for protection or destruction. It has provided people with various opportunities in numerous fields that we cannot imagine a world without social media networks. While social networks are found to be useful in some ways, they even have a negative impact on the lives of individuals. One of the major impacts is addiction, and therefore, the students and young adults are those who are susceptible to addiction in comparison with other age groups. Studies suggest that social networks may influence people in many ways. The mode of communication was mostly through social networks during the pandemic situation because of transportation difficulties and ease of communicating with others. Research suggests that the rates of depression in the general population might be seven times higher during the COVID outbreak [45]. News reports say that the pandemic triggers a sharp rise in cases of depression [46]. The present study was aimed at finding out the relationship between social networking usage and its impact, like psychological distress and happiness among young adults during time of pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between social networking usage and its impacts like psychological distress and happiness.

Participants

A total of 316 (males=106, females=210) young adults belonging to ages of 18-35 years ($M = 21.80$; $SD = 2.74$) were recruited from different states across South India using the snowball technique. The majority of the young adults were Hindus (65.8%). The majority of the young adults in the sample were from Kerala (48.6%), and most resided in rural areas (34.5%). The majority of the young adults were graduates (51.9%). The majority of them were from the science department (62.3%). The majority of the participants had fathers who were graduates (30.4%) and those occupied in unskilled jobs (47.2%). The majority of the mothers were graduates (35.4%) and those who were unemployed (57.9%).

Instruments

Social Networking Sites Usage & Needs Scale (SNSUNS) [47]

The Social Networking Sites Usage and Needs Scale purports to measure the usage pattern of social networking sites and the motives for using the social networks. The scale consists of 36 items and two subscales, namely, the usage pattern subscale and needs subscale. The usage pattern subscale comprised of 7 multiple indicators to measure the use of social networks by questions related to the duration of Social Networking Sites (SNS), the frequency, and access. SNSs usage was measured in minutes and hours (interval

categories like 30-60 min), access to SNSs was measured as 'checking SNSs account' and sign-in per day, and time of increased use was also measured from morning to night, membership of SNSs was indicated by years. A preferred device to use social networks like the mobile, laptop was asked, and several active SNSs accounts were measured in a specific number, like one to more than five. The needs subscale is comprised of 29 items that assess five different needs, viz., diversion needs, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs. Diversion need subscale measures the act of diverting or straying from an activity or use (e.g., SNSs help me to feel less lonely). The cognitive need subscale assesses the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking (e.g., SNSs help to gain knowledge). The affective needs subscale measures the individual differences in emotional regulation (e.g., SNSs help me to express my emotions to others easily). The personal integrative needs subscale includes elements of both cognitive and affective needs; it includes needs related to self-esteem and veneration (e.g., I use SNSs to gain approval among friends). Social integrative needs encompass the need to socialize with family, friends, and relations in society (e.g., SNSs allow me to stay in touch with family). The respondents are asked to rate each item on the scale with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Separate scores for the subscales were added. The total score on the needs scale was obtained by adding all the scores of subscales. The total maximum and minimum scores are 145 and 29. A higher score on the need scale indicates that a specific need is dominant in the participant. The Cronbach's alpha for the various subscales, viz., diversion needs, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs on the present sample, are 0.73, 0.89, 0.82, 0.89 0.76, respectively.

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) [48]

Originally Depression Anxiety Stress Scale is a 42 item self-report instrument designed to measure distress along three axes of related negative emotional states: depression, anxiety, and stress. The questionnaire used for the current research is a 21-item short version of the Depression Anxiety Stress (DAS) scale. Each of the 3 DASS-21 scales contains seven items, divided into subscales – depression, anxiety, and stress. The depression subscale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest or involvement, anhedonia, and inertia (e.g., I couldn't seem to experience any positive feelings at all). The anxiety subscale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect (e.g., I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself). The stress subscale assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, and being easily upset or agitated, irritable or over-reactive, and impatient (e.g., I tended to overreact to situations). The respondents were asked to rate each item on a 4-point scale from 0 (*did not apply to me at all*) to 3 (*applied to me very much*). The scoring for each subscale is computed by adding all their respective items. The total score is computed by adding all the 21 items and then multiplying that score by two. The maximum and minimum scores possible for the subscales range from 42 and 0, and the total DAS scale range from 126 and 0. The greater the total scores on the DAS scale, the greater the distress. The Cronbach's alpha for all the items on depression, anxiety, and stress subscales on the present sample is 0.88, 0.85, and 0.84, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha on the total scale is 0.94.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) [49]

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire is a self-report instrument that was devised for assessing personal happiness. It consists of 29 items, and it is a unidimensional scale. The respondents were asked to respond in a 6-point Likert scale response format from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The total score on the scale is obtained by adding up the numbers for all the 29 questions and dividing that score by 29. The maximum and minimum total scores possible on the scale are 6 and 1, which is measured as the greater the score level, the greater the happiness. The Cronbach's alpha of scale on the present sample was found to be 0.86.

Research design

The research design used for the present study is a correlational survey. The study was carried out as an online survey since it was not feasible to carry out an in-person survey during the pandemic.

Procedure

The data collection was done online. The process started by building the survey using Google Forms. The informed consent form instructions to complete each scale along with the scales and a personal data sheet were included in the Google form. The link to the online survey was generated and was circulated to many young adults using the snowball technique. The researcher had received all the responses entered in an Excel spreadsheet, and then they were coded in SPSS, scored, and analysis has been carried out.

Statistical Analyses

ANOVA was done for comparing gender and areas of residence differences with regard to study variables. Correlation analysis was carried out to find the relationship between several social networking sites and psychological distress and happiness. Multiple linear regressions were done to find out the predictors of psychological distress and happiness.

RESULTS

One-way ANOVA

A series of one-way analyses of variance was carried out to examine gender and areas of residence differences with regard to study variables viz., diversion needs, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, psychological distress, and happiness.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between genders (Males and Females) on diversion needs, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, psychological distress, and happiness. It was found that males and females differed on happiness [$F(1,314) = 4.41, p < .05$]. Females ($M = 4.09, SD = .60$) are more happy than males ($M = 3.94, SD = .06$). No significant difference was found between males and females on diversion needs [$F(1,314) = 2.73, p > .05$], cognitive needs [$F(1,314) = .11, p > .05$], affective needs [$F(1,314) = .13, p > .05$], personal integrative needs [$F(1,314) = .60, p > .05$], social integrative needs [$F(1,314) = .09, p > .05$], and psychological distress [$F(1,314) = 1.16, p > .05$].

A one way between subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between areas of residence (Rural, Small town, City, Metro) on the study variables. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there exists no difference between areas of residence on the study variables. No significant difference was found between different areas of residence on diversion needs [$F(3,312) = 1.42, p > .05$], cognitive needs [$F(3,312) = 1.89, p > .05$], affective needs [$F(3,312) = .38, p > .05$], personal integrative needs [$F(3,312) = .33, p > .05$], social integrative needs [$F(3,312) = 1.36, p > .05$], psychological distress [$F(3,312) = 1.12, p > .05$] and happiness [$F(3,312) = .29, p > .05$].

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between the regular user, occasional user, and rare user on psychological distress. The post hoc comparisons using the Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between the regular user ($M = 41.06, SD = 28.79$), the occasional user ($M = 43.06, SD = 23.41$) and rare user ($M = 47.20, SD = 32.17$) of social networks on psychological distress [$F(2,313) = .29, p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between the regular user, occasional user, and rare user on happiness. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between regular user ($M = 4.05, SD = .63$), occasional user ($M = 4.03, SD = .59$) and rare user ($M = 3.97, SD = .45$) of social networks happiness [$F(2,313) = .95, p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between the preferred device of usage on psychological distress. The results indicated that there exists no significant difference between laptop users ($M = 35.33, SD = 12.22$) and mobile users ($M = 41.51, SD = 28.23$) on psychological distress [$F(1,314) = .14, p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between preferred devices of usage on happiness. The results indicated that there exists no significant difference between laptop users ($M = 3.99, SD = .97$), and mobile users ($M = 4.05, SD = .63$), on happiness [$F(1,314) = .14, p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in checking social networks per day on psychological distress. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who check social networks once every notification beep ($M = 38$, $SD = 22.63$), 1-2 times per day ($M = 31$, $SD = 9.89$), 5-6 times per day ($M = 44$, $SD = 28.69$), 7-8 times per day ($M = 42.25$, $SD = 28.24$), and more than 9 times per day ($M = 41.45$, $SD = 28.24$) on psychological distress [$F(4,311) = .09$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in checking social networks per day on happiness. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who check social networks once every notification beep ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .85$), 1-2 times per day ($M = 4.91$, $SD = .99$), 5-6 times per day ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .59$), 7-8 times per day ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .63$) and more than 9 times per day ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .62$) on happiness [$F(4,311) = 1.36$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in time spend on social networks per day on psychological distress. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who spend 3-4 hour ($M = 44.60$, $SD = 28.69$), 5-6 hour ($M = 40.19$, $SD = 27.75$), 7-8 hour ($M = 42.68$, $SD = 28.73$) and 9 hours ($M = 42$, $SD = 0$), on psychological distress [$F(3, 312) = .24$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in time spent on social networks per day on happiness. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who spend 3-4 hour ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .52$), 5-6 hour ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .68$), 7-8 hour ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .56$) and 9 hour or more ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0$) in social networks on happiness [$F(3, 312) = .27$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between daytime users, evening users, and weekend users of social networks on psychological distress. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between daytime user ($M = 39.45$, $SD = 27.44$), evening user ($M = 41.55$, $SD = 27.60$) and weekend user ($M = 41.39$, $SD = 30.92$) of social networks on psychological distress [$F(2,313) = .03$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between the daytime user, evening user, and weekend users of social networks on happiness. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between daytime user ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .79$), evening user ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .61$) and weekend user ($M = 4.12$, $SD = .65$) of social networks on happiness [$F(2,313) = .49$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in the duration of using social networks on psychological distress. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who used social networks less than one year ago ($M = 48.57$, $SD = 10.99$), 3-4 years ago ($M = 53$, $SD = 46.67$), 5-6 years ago ($M = 43.28$, $SD = 28.74$) and 7-8 years ago ($M = 40.61$, $SD = 28.24$) on psychological distress [$F(3, 312) = .43$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was carried out to find the difference between young adults in the duration of using social networks on happiness. The post hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that there was no significant difference between those who used social networks less than one year ago ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .69$), 3-4 years ago ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .95$), 5-6 years ago ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .64$) and 7-8 years ago ($M = 4.07$, $SD = .61$) on happiness [$F(3, 312) = .79$, $p > .05$] among young adults.

Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between several social networking sites and psychological distress among young adults. There was no significant relationship found between the number of social networking sites and psychological distress ($r = .05$, $n = 316$, $p > .05$).

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between several social networking sites and happiness among young adults. There was a significant negative relationship found between the number of social networking sites used and happiness ($r = -.115$, $n = 316$, $p < .05$).

Multiple Regressions

A series of multiple linear regressions to predict psychological distress and happiness among young adults with social networking needs as the predictor.

Table 1
Multiple linear regression analysis of various social networking needs as predictors of psychological distress (N = 316)

Model 1	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	S.E.	B		
(Constant)	19.74	8.49		2.32	0.02
Diversion needs	-0.29	0.58	-0.04	-0.51	0.61
Cognitive needs	0.08	0.43	-0.02	0.19	0.85
Affective needs	0.28	0.45	0.05	0.63	0.53
Personal integrative needs	1.06	0.38	0.24	2.78	0.001
Social integrative needs	-0.001	0.39	0.001	0.001	1

Note: $R^2 = 0.07$, $Adj R^2 = 0.06$, $F(5,310) = 4.80$, $p < 0.01$

As may be seen from the table above, the model is significant, $R^2 = .07$, $F(5,310) = 4.80$, $p < .01$. Personal integrative needs ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) significantly and positively predicted psychological distress, and it accounts for 7% of the variance in psychological distress among young adults.

Table 2
Multiple linear regression analysis of various social networking needs as predictors of happiness (N = 316)

Model 2	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	3.88	0.19		19.94	0.001
Diversion needs	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.54	0.59
Cognitive needs	0.001	0.01	0.001	0.04	0.97
Affective needs	-0.001	0.01	-0.03	-0.38	0.71
Personal integrative needs	-0.001	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.84
Social integrative needs	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.79	0.43

Note: $R^2 = 0.01$, $Adj R^2 = -0.11$, $F(5,310) = 0.34$, $p > 0.05$

As may be seen from the table above, the model of multiple regression is not significant, $R^2 = .01$, $F(5,310) = .34$, $p > .05$. Diversion needs ($\beta = .04$, $p > .05$), cognitive needs ($\beta = .001$, $p > .05$), affective needs ($\beta = -.03$, $p > .05$), personal integrative needs ($\beta = -.02$, $p > .05$) and social integrative needs ($\beta = -.06$, $p > .05$) did not significantly predicted happiness in this model.

DISCUSSION

The present study examines the relationship between psychological distress and happiness among young adults with social networking usage. It also examines gender and socio-demographic differences in psychological distress and happiness among young adults.

Previous research shows that gender differences exist in the usage of social networks. Gender norms are being transposed onto social networking use, with women being more drawn to social networks for social connections than males [50-51]. Gender disparities in social networking usage have been discovered empirically. Some studies report that males are more active in social networks than women [52-53], while others report findings contradicting to this [54]. Men reported using social networking sites to establish new relationships, while women reported using them more to maintain existing relationships [55]. The desire to

self-improve on SNSs motivates both men and women [50]. Recent advancements in communication technologies indicate that SNSs play an important role in the formation of relationships and satisfying the need for attachment among young people [56]. Women are primarily motivated by relational needs, such as retaining close relations and gaining access to social knowledge on close and remote networks, while men are motivated by the desire to obtain information of a general nature [50]. For female youth, social media may be a detrimental leisure activity, but for male youth, it may be a beneficial one [57]. In contrast to the previous studies, the present study found no gender differences in social network usage. The majority of the participants are students who use the internet as a medium for studying due to the pandemic condition, and the only socializing medium accessible to them is virtual. Perhaps the findings here are attributable to the pandemic setting and lockdown, as well as the participants' primary means of socializing being social networking. Furthermore, differences in age groups and educational backgrounds of participants in prior research and the current study might possibly account for the differences in results.

A few studies have explored gender differences in the prevalence of psychological distress. Women are reported to be more distressed than men [58-62]. Gender differences in distress can vary depending on context and socio-cultural setting [63]. Women are more distressed than men as they are more vulnerable to sexual harassment and are subject to daily threats due to their social roles [58], and also due to their ill health, which is attributed partly to their lack of access to health-promoting services, their unequal vulnerability to stress and the daily stressors associated with women [60]. Findings contrary to the above studies state that males are more distressed because of the societal expectations on them [64], and failure to fulfill the expectations could have an impact on men's self-esteem, which can lead to distress [65]. A few studies reported that men experience a higher level of stress than women. Women are more likely than men to confess to feeling overwhelmed, while men may see this as a sign of failure and refrain from disclosing real stress levels [66-67]. In the present study, no significant difference in psychological distress is found among males and females. This may be because both men and women may be coping adequately with the stressors they confront, though differently. Men are substantially more likely to use maladaptive coping strategies or ignore the stressor, while women are significantly more likely to use adaptive coping strategies [65]. The participants of the present study are young adults and have not yet transitioned to the adult world of individual responsibility of a family or work. Further, all of them are students, and are exposed to similar stressors in life by and large owing to their developmental stage and current status as students. Hence, they may be experiencing similar stressors which could have resulted in the men and women reporting similar levels of psychological distress.

The results indicated that women were found to be happier than males. The finding is in line with the previous studies, which revealed that gender was associated with subjective well-being [68-69], and women tended to report higher happiness than men [70] because men tend to portray emotions synonymous with authority and social status in such a way that their masculinity and social standing were not jeopardized [71]. In contrast, women are more likely to express more of their emotional feelings, such as happiness and gratitude [72]. Women are more likely to experience intense positive emotions like joy and happiness, which aids social bonding and appears to be more consistent with the traditional role as caregiver, whereas men display anger, pride, and contempt which are more consistent with the role of protector and provider [73]. This could be explained by the gender role theory that women are more attentive to the desires of others and share their thoughts more freely, and women often experience more intense positive and negative emotions [74]. However, some studies report findings that are contradictory to the findings of this study [75-76]. The relationship between happiness and gender appears to be mixed because happiness is conceived differently in every society, and it is determined by cultural values [77].

The use of the internet and social networks in urban and rural locations has been studied in the literature. There is a major difference in the use of social media among people from cities, rural places, and metropolitan cities [78]. Previous studies have shown that people in urban and semi-urban areas use social networking sites more than people in rural areas [79-80]. In contrast, no significant difference in terms of internet usage pattern between those from urban and rural areas was found in previous research [81]. However, the findings of the present study show that there is no significant difference between the areas of residence and social networking usage, which corroborates with the finding of the previous study [81]. The ease with which individuals may use social networks is determined by their access to them. A wide range of

devices is accessible in both cities and rural areas, and if there is any unavailability, people may travel to cities and purchase them. The use of social networks is person-specific, dependent on the individual's interests. The Digital India campaign, launched in 2015 by the Government of India includes efforts to build high-speed networks in rural regions and promote digital literacy and to ensure that all citizens have access to Government services via the internet through various schemes like Bharat Broadband Network (BBNL), Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (DISHA), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, DigiLocker, and others. By making internet available to many rural regions and empowering India digitally in the realm of technology, the initiative has resulted in a huge growth in digital literacy. Because of the efforts of Government, rural regions appear to be expanding in technology use at the same rate as metropolitan cities. Various initiatives have been launched to promote digital learning under 'National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology' (NMEICT), with the goal of leveraging the potential of ICT to make the best quality material available to all learners in the country for free. SWAYAM, National Digital Library, Virtual Lab and E-Yantra are a few of the initiatives.

There is no significant difference between the areas of residence on psychological distress. Gong et al. [82] report a link between city dwellers and psychological distress. Compared to rural settings, cities have a greater prevalence of most health problems because of density, crowding and noise [83]. In contrast, another study reported that greater distress was found in rural areas [84]. Since perception of distress differs individually [85], there is little role of the place where they live to influence the distress experienced by individuals.

Happiness is not only based on individual perceptions but also on social and economic context [86]. The relationship between happiness appears to vary in urban and rural contexts [87]. Previous research has linked one's place of residence to an individual's degree of happiness [88-89]. In comparison to rural regions, cities have higher incomes and economic opportunities, which are accompanied by higher levels of happiness [90]. However, greater happiness is seen in people from rural areas [91] as happiness is associated with lower population density and a better sense of belonging in one's society, and having a strong social network is critical to happiness [92]. The present study shows that there is no significant difference between the areas of residence and happiness. The extent to which the area of residence determines a person's happiness is unclear. People do not judge environmental attributes the same way. Hence the association between the area of living and happiness is heterogeneous [90].

Social networking has grown ingrained in modern culture, which may have an impact on mental health. A putative relationship between social networking and mental health problems is explored in previous studies [93-95]. Positive social networking interactions, social support, and social connectedness were consistently associated with reduced levels of depression, whereas negative social networking interaction and social comparisons were associated with higher levels of distress [96]. Another study, however, reported that social network usage was not predictive of distress [97]. The finding of the present study shows that personal integrative needs positively predicted psychological distress. Personal integrative needs include both the elements of cognitive and affective needs, and include self-esteem, status, confidence, and stability [98]. Generally, individuals are in a marathon to attain integrative needs. When people participate in social networks that do not meet their requirements for acceptance and belonging, they are more likely to experience distress [99]. Whenever individuals wish to fulfill the expectations of society, they will be undergoing distress to achieve those needs. From the findings of the present study, it is clear that whenever the need for personal integration increases, psychological distress also increases.

As a source of happiness, internet usage is one of the most significant necessities of this present era. A negative relationship was found between the number of social networking sites used and happiness in the present study, which implies that as the number of social networks used by individuals increases, happiness decreases. This finding echoes earlier research [44, 100-101] that also have shown a negative relationship between happiness and social network use. As the number of social networks used by individual increases, eventually, the time spent on it increases. A negative association between the number of hours spent on social networks and subjective well-being was reported by Arampatzi [102]. Because of the enormous demand, the number of social networks used was proportional to the amount of worry [103]. The increased use of social networks may disrupt social relationships while isolating people in social terms, and there is a tendency for the individual to cut off the important relationships with family and devote themselves to virtual

relationships [104]. Such extended reliance on virtual relationship may negatively influence the happiness of an individual. A few studies have reported negative associations between the usage of social networks and happiness, which may be mediated through social comparison [44, 105-106]. Many studies contradict this viewpoint, claiming that there is a positive relationship between social network usage and, therefore, the well-being of an individual [107-108]. Social networking usage makes people happy, as reported in both qualitative [109] and quantitative research [107, 110]. This may be because the usage of social networks provides individuals the liberty of communication and socialization. Several studies did not find any relationship between social networking and happiness [111-112]. The mixed findings on the relationship between social network usage and happiness are because social networks usage is likely to include both positive and negative impacts, depending on factors like the purpose of usage and engagement with other activities. What is the optimal use of social networking appears to vary across individuals and environments?

CONCLUSION

Social media have evolved into powerful conduits of communication, paving the way for individuals worldwide to communicate ideas, views, and sentiments. Social media have grown as effective channels of communication; they pave the way for communicating ideas, opinions, sharing feelings with people all over the world. The majority of social network users in India are young adults because they have an inclination to own a positive impact by using social networks. The study aimed to find out the relationship between social networking usage and needs on psychological distress and happiness among young adults. No gender differences were found in social network usage and psychological distress. Similarly, no significant difference in areas of residence on social networking, distress, and happiness was found. According to the findings, gender difference exists in happiness, and women are found to be happier than males because women are likely to experience more positive intense emotions than men. A negative relationship between the number of social network use and happiness was found. It was shown that personal integrative needs were found to be a positive predictor of psychological distress.

One of the limitations of the present study is that it relied on self-report measures and used an online survey method for data collection. As there is no face-to-face interaction between the respondents, there is less chance for clarification and probing, which might result in less accurate results. The sample for the present study consisted of young adults, and hence the findings cannot be generalized to other age groups. Another limitation that needs to be acknowledged is unequal gender distribution.

The present study hosts several opportunities for future research by adding more variables like aggression, mental health, and coping behavior. The research provides insight into the potential for distress as a result of social network activities. The negative impacts of using social networks can be reduced by raising awareness about the limits that should be followed while using them. Recommendations can be made to the Government of India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regarding internet usage restrictions in terms of hours and age, as excessive social networking usage has a deleterious impact on users. The social media rules should oblige firms to enable the traceability of end-to-end encrypted chats, as well as to create local offices staffed with senior personnel to deal with law enforcement and user grievances.

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