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A Study on effect of online social networking on lifestyle of rural adolescents

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to study the effect of online social networking on life style of rural adolescents. The total sample for the present study consisted of 200 rural adolescents i.e. 100 boys and 100 girls. Samples were selected from co-educational government schools of 5 villages of Rajsamand District of Rajasthan. An inventory on effect of online social networking on life style of adolescents was utilized for the research. Percentage, mean percent scores and z- test were computed for analysis of data. The results of the study revealed that effect of online social networking was found in personality, social interaction and hobbies of rural adolescents. Clear cut gender difference was observed. Hence, further studies on larger samples need to be undertaken to clearly prove the difference and impact. The findings of the study are likely to be of immense importance to scholars who are interested in carrying out research related to online social networking and for parents and counsellors.

Keywords: Online social networking, lifestyle, adolescent

Introduction

In the past, family was the first place to interact and communicate with each other. But now new connection to interact and communicate has started with the arrival of man-made technologies called computer and internet. Online social networking is the use of internet based social media programs and form of communication. Social networking is the new sign of communication in personal, business, education or employment opportunities. An online community of people with a common interest use websites or other technologies to make connections with friends, family, classmates, customers, clients, share information, resources, etc. People use social networking sites for countless activities. Social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, My Space, LinkedIn, Yahoo, You tube, Instagram, etc. Billions of peoples around the world use social networking to share information and make friends and connections. Global Digital suite of reports reveals that now more than 4 billion people around the using the internet and more than 3 billion people around the world now use online social networking each month (www.digitalreport.wearesocial.com, 2018) [3].

Online social networking is used by people of all age groups but social networking sites are the most common activity for children and adolescents. Adolescents use online social networking sites because of their personal and educational needs. Adolescents are now becoming the most defined group of internet users and engage in computer mediated communication and interaction. Now many adolescents have their own device to internet access and because of this, social media and internet use among adolescents has increased quickly in recent years.

Bhatt (2016) [2] found that online social networking affect the lifestyle patterns of the urban adolescent boys and girls specifically their daily routine activities, academic performance, social, familial and personal interaction. As a sequel of this research the present research was undertaken to study the effect of online social networking on rural adolescents.

Methodology

The study was conducted in co-educational government schools located within the limits of Rajsamand District, Rajasthan. The total sample for the present study consisted of 200 school going adolescents, between the ages of 15-18 years. Preliminary survey was conducted to select eligible subjects for the study.

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Students found eligible as per delimitations of the study were identified and a sample of 100 boys and 100 girls was drawn using chit method. Background information proforma was used to procure the necessary details regarding the subjects and their families. The inventory on “Effect of online social networking on lifestyle of adolescents” developed by Bhatt (2016) [2] was used to assess the online social networking. The data collected were scored, coded and categorized. Percentage and mean percent scores were computed. Z- test was utilized for comparison between boys and girls to study effect of online social networking on lifestyle.

Results and Discussion

The effect on online social networking on life style has been presented under six sub-categories viz. effect on daily routine activities, effect on study patterns and academic aspects, effect on hobbies, effect on physical and mental activity, effect on personality and effect on social interaction.

Effect on daily routine activities

The results of effect of online social networking on daily routine activities of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 1. Results clearly reveal that daily routine activities were observed to be affected by the online social networking of adolescents. Positive effect of online social networking in motivation towards yoga was observed in 89.8% boys and girls. A negative effect was observed with an MPS of approximately 50% in boys 55.60% in girls in neglect of household responsibilities, disturbed sleeping schedule, disturbed bathing schedule and disturbed meal pattern. Malhotra and Mahakud (2014) [4] reported in their research on online social networking that most of the participants were found to carry social networking at night and ignored daily activities. Adolescents were found to depict disturbed healthy and sleeping pattern in their research which was also observed in the results of present research.

Table 1: Effect of online social networking on daily routine activities among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n = 100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect on daily routine activities	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	It has motivated me towards regular yoga and meditation to keep myself fit and healthy.	89.8	89.8
2.	It has affected my bathing schedule- I skip taking bath every day.	49.6	55.4
3.	It has disturbed sleeping schedule causing late night sleeps and waking up too late in the morning.	52.8	58.4
4.	It has resulted in changes in meal pattern and skipping of meals.	47.4	55.2
5.	It has led me to neglect house hold responsibilities.	54.4	59.8

Effect on study patterns and academic aspects

The results of effect of online social networking on study patterns and academic aspects of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 2. Results clearly reveal that study pattern and academic aspects were also found to be affected by the online social networking of adolescents. A positive effect in providing a wider spectrum of knowledge in addition to classroom teaching was observed in 72%of boys and 69.2% of girls. Another positive effect in terms of improvement in understanding ability by engaging in academic forums was observed in 65.8%of boys and 67% of girls. Negative effect was observed in terms of decline in academic grades and position in the class in 55.6% of boys and 61.6% of girls and reduction in consultation of reference books for academic assignments and projects in 54.4%of boys and 65.8% of girls. Other effects were observed in terms of disturbance in study schedule 53.6% of boys and 58.8% of girls and reading and writing skills in 53.6%of boys and 60.6% of girls. The other

negative effect was also observed that 53.2% of boys and 62.4% of girls solely rely on online social networking for assignments and projects. However, negative effects in terms of confusion in view of contradictory information available on social networking sites in 50% of boys and 64.8% of girls and distraction from studies in 48% of boys and 61% of girls were observed. The positive findings in the present research are similar to the findings of Stevens (2009) [6] who stated that collaboration through social networking sites supports more of a constructivist approach to learning, where adolescents and educators can work together to co-create understanding of a particular topic, rather than an approach that emphasizes individual contributions. Also it helps adolescents in learning and practicing new skills which are not available offline. However the present research also confirms that the online social networking also results as negative consequences in academic aspects.

Table 2: Effect of online social networking on study pattern and academic aspects among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n =100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of study pattern and academic aspects	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	It distracts me from my studies.	48	61
2.	It affects my study schedule.	53.6	58.8
3.	I solely rely on online social networking for assignments and projects.	53.2	62.4
4.	It has reduced my consultation of reference books for academic assignments and projects.	54.4	65.8
5.	Many a times I get misguided/confused in view of contradictory information available on social networking sites.	50	65.8
6.	Engaging in academic forums/expert advice on social networking sites improves my understanding ability.	65.8	67
7.	It provides a wider spectrum of knowledge in addition to classroom teaching.	72	69.2
8.	It has negatively affected my reading and writing skills.	53.6	60.6
9.	My academic grades or position in class has declined.	55.6	61.6

Effect on hobbies

The results of effect of online social networking on hobbies of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 3. Results clearly reveal that hobbies were found to be influenced by the online social networking of adolescents. Online social networking helped them to work well in group co-curricular

activities in 71.6% of boys and 77.6% of girls. Girls were observed to gain more in refining artistic ability (62.4%) than boys (38.2%). Perusal of hobbies like outdoor games, writing stories and reading novels were less affected in boys (50%) than girls (64.2%).

Table 3: Effect of online social networking on hobbies among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n=100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of hobbies	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	Online social networking helps me to work well in group co-curricular activities.	71.6	77.6
2.	It has resulted in refinement of artistic ability.	38.2	62.4
3.	It has screened me from performing other activities of my interest specifically- Playing outdoor games/ Writing poems and stories/ Reading novels, magazines and any other.	50	64.2

Effect on physical and mental activity

The results of effect of online social networking on physical and mental activity of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 4. Results clearly reveal that physical and mental activity was comparatively less affected by the online social networking of adolescents than other aspects. Approximately 60.4% girls reported an impact in terms of

resulting in lethargy whereas in boys there was less effect. Depression and moodiness was more reported by girls 57.6% than boys 52.2%. The results are in line with study conducted by Shah (2010) who reported that social networking sites promote mental health problems among adolescents. It results in depression, stress and loneliness.

Table 4: Effect of online social networking on physical and mental activity among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n=100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of physical and mental activity	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	It has restricted my mobility and has made life sedentary and lethargic.	46.4	60.4
2.	It has resulted in health problems.	56.2	58.4
3.	I feel depressed, moody or nervous in absence of online social networking.	52.2	57.6

Effect on personality

The results of effect of online social networking on personality of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 5. Results clearly reveal that personality dimension was also affected by the online social networking of adolescents. A positive effect of online social networking in sharing personal experiences without any hesitation and boosting self-confidence was observed in 74% boys and 78.6% girls. Other effect in terms of developing positive attitude and aspiration towards achievement of their future goals in well-planned manner was depicted in nearly 70% boys and 68% girls. A negative effect of online social networking like cyber-bullying

and online harassment with an effect on self-esteem was observed in nearly 60% of boys and girls. Negative effect was observed in terms of declination in moral values in 56.4% boys and 60% girls. The results can be discussed in light of Barker (2010) who reported that male students were likely to be bullied and victimized in both physical and cyber-environment and recommended that parents should guide their children about cyber crimes on online social networking sites. It can thus be concluded that engaging in online social networking have positive and negative effects on personality of boys and girls.

Table 5: Effect of online social networking on personality among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n=100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of personality	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	It has helped me to share personal experiences without any hesitation and thus boosted my self-confidence.	74	78.6
2.	It has made me more self-centered and less sympathetic.	53.4	61
3.	Cyber-bullying and online harassment has affected myself-esteem.	59	60.8
4.	It has led me to develop positive attitude towards everything.	73.6	67.8
5.	It is a cause of decline in moral values.	56.4	59.6
6.	It aspires me to achieve my future in a well- planned manner.	71	68.4

Effect on social interaction

The results of effect of online social networking on social interaction of rural adolescent boys and girls is presented in Table 6. Results clearly reveal that social interaction was found to be affected by the online social networking of adolescents. A positive effect was observed in terms of connecting people with similar interests in 76.6% of boys and 74.4% of girls. The other effect was observed in terms of reduction of boredom in 71% of boys and 66% of girls followed by opportunity of mingling with people from varied backgrounds in 70.4%of boys and 66.2% of girls. A negative

effect was observed in terms of creation of distance in real life relationships in 55.8% of boys and 58.4% of girls. Further, it reduces face-to-face peer interaction in 53.4%of boys and 59% of girls. The other effects was observed in terms of excessive online activity resulting in frustrating and aggressive attitude towards parents in 53% of boys 63% of girls followed by disobeying parents advice which created distance among self and parents in 53%of boys and 62.2% of girls. Thus, it can be seen that online social networking has both positive and negative impact in terms of social interaction.

Table 6: Effect of online social networking on social interaction among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n=100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of social interaction	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	It has helped me to connect with people with shared interests.	76.6	74.4
2.	It has helped me to learn about people with varied background.	70.4	66.2
3.	It has helped me to reduce my boredom through interaction with friends.	71	66
4.	Excessive online activity has resulted in frustrating and aggressive attitude towards my parents.	53	63
5.	I disobey my parents' advice which has created distance between me and my parents.	53	62.2
6.	It has reduced face-to-face peer interaction.	53.4	59
7.	It has created illusion and has distanced real life relationships.	55.8	58.4

Overall effect of online social networking on lifestyle

Table 7 clearly shows that personality, social interaction and hobbies of majority of adolescent boys and girls were affected by online social networking. Physical and mental activities comparatively were less affected in rural adolescent boys and girls. Results of present research are similar to the results of Bhatt (2016) [2] who found that effect of online social

networking on lifestyle was maximum in perusing hobbies in majority of urban adolescents followed by effect on personality traits and academic aspects of urban adolescents. Thus, social interaction was more affected in rural adolescents whereas academic aspect was observed to be affected more in urban adolescents.

Table 7: Overall effect of online social networking on life style among rural adolescent boys and girls (MPS) n=100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of online social networking on life style	Boys (MPS)	Girls (MPS)
1.	Daily routine activities	58.8	63.72
2.	Study pattern and academic aspects	56.24	63.46
3.	Hobbies	53.26	68.06
4.	Physical and mental activity	51.6	58.8
5.	Personality	64.56	66.03
6.	Social interaction	61.88	64.17

Comparison of effect of online social networking on life style of rural adolescent boys and girls

z-test was applied to compare effect of online social networking on life style among rural adolescent boys and girls and presented in Table 8.

Results from Table 8 clearly indicate that there was significant difference in effect of online social networking on daily routine activities, study pattern and academic aspects, hobbies, physical and mental activity and social interaction between boys and girls. This difference was found to be

significant at 5% level of significance. No significant difference was observed in effect of online social networking on personality of boys and girls. Overall, the effect of online social networking on life style shows that there was significant difference between boys and girls. Thus, it is clear that there is a gender difference in impact of online social networking between boys and girls, where effect is more on girls than boys.

Table 8: Comparative analysis of effect of online social networking on life style among rural adolescent boys and girls n= 100 boys, 100 girls

S. No.	Effect of online social networking	Boys		Girls		z-value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Daily routine activities	58.8	17.54	63.72	14.71	2.149*
2.	Study pattern and academic aspects	56.24	7.694	63.46	3.479	8.55*
3.	Hobbies	53.26	16.937	68.06	8.305	7.846*
4.	Physical and mental activity	51.6	4.927	58.8	1.442	14.025*
5.	Personality	64.56	9.32	66.03	7.222	1.247 N.S.
6.	Social interaction	61.88	10.32	64.17	5.473	1.963*
7.	overall	57.72	4.996	64.04	3.099	10.75*

*Significant at 5% level of significance.

Conclusion

Social networking sites are web based service that provides chance to individuals to create their own personal profiles with the choice of their own. Social networking has turn into one of the major forms of communication among adolescents. After pursuing this research it is clear that online social networking plays an important role in adolescents lives. Adolescents use online social networking to express themselves, which could result in positive or negative effects. Further there can be advantages and disadvantages of using the social networking sites. It is interesting to note that rural adolescents are also being benefited now a day in gaining knowledge and information through online social networking. But since a negative effect has also been observed in the present research hence it is imperative to supervise the online social networking of the adolescents.

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