

Social networking sites usage and psychological wellbeing: A survey among Telangana youth

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Article info

Received: 1 April 2022

Accepted: 31 May 2022

Keywords: social networking usage;
psychological wellbeing; Indian youth;
urban; rural; semi-urban.

How to cite this article: Putta, S.K.,
Kohir, S., & Chavan, R.A. (2022). Social
networking sites usage and psychological
wellbeing: A survey among
Telangana youth, International Journal of
Politics and Media, 1(1), 21-28. Retrieved
from <https://ijpmonline.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/9>

Abstract

"Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication," said Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s, commenting on the influence of broadcasting medium; further, he adds that Innumerable confusions and a profound feeling of despair invariably emerge in periods of great technological and cultural transitions (McLuhan, 1967). India is going through such a transition in this Information age, especially after the jio effect (Ghosh, 2019), which has bought millions of online by providing free High speed 4G data for more than six months as an introductory offer to increase its subscribers, both urban and rural Indian youth were quick to take advantage of the offer as youth instinctively understood the present environment (McLuhan, 1967). As of August 2021, India is the second-largest online market in the world with over 749 million internet users, internet access and use largely vary in the country due to the socio-economic divide and the number of users varied greatly among the urban and rural population (Keelery, 2021). 90% of the internet users in India are on social networking sites; most of them are between 18 to 24 years of age (Keelery, Number of social network users India 2015-2040, 2021). Passive browsing social networking sites (SNSs) correlates with poorer wellbeing (Verduyn, et al., 2015). However, less research is conducted that examined the impact of social networking usage on the psychological wellbeing of Indian youth and compared rural and urban social networking usage. For a diverse sample of college students (N = 629, Mage = 21, SDage = 46.2% female), for this study social networking usage is considered as the amount of time spent on SNSs in a day and how long they have been using SNSs (in years). While the amount of time spent on SNSs has an impact on rural Indian youth, how long they have been on SNSs has an impact on psychological wellbeing of the urban Indian youth and neither the amount of time or how long they are using SNSs has impacted the semi-urban Indian youth.

1. Introduction

Even though there is a varied internet usage among the rural, urban, and semi-urban youth of India due to the apparent digital divide prior to September 2016 owing to high data prices and low technology penetration, data consumption and smartphone adoption in both the urban and rural India has increased rapidly with introduction free High speed 4G mobile internet of jio mobile network, which was provided free for more than six months as an introductory offer starting from 5th September 2016 (McMahon, 2020). Today, India is the second-largest internet user globally with 749 million users and is projected to grow to over 1.5 billion users by 2040. Of the total number of users in the country, most of the users access the Internet through their smartphones (Keelery, Number of internet users in India 2010-2040, 2021).

Despite these higher internet penetration levels, India has a long way to catch up equally. There is a rural-urban digital divide; the rural penetration is only 29 percent against a national average of 51 percent. Across states, the rural-urban divide is the narrowest in Goa, Kerala, and northeastern states and the widest in West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. In addition to the broad digital divide, the gendered digital divide is also much higher in India, with

Indian women are 15 percent less likely to own a mobile phone and 33 percent less likely to use mobile internet services than men compared to countries like China, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia (Mitali Nikore, 2021).

With the rise in internet usage and digitization of services and socialization, smartphone phones have become an integral part of our lives. According to a study conducted in December 2019 in India, with 37 percent the age group 16 to 24 years has the highest penetration rate among smartphone users, followed by the 24 to 35 years age group (Sun, 2021). More than 50 percent of the internet users in India are on social networking and social media platforms with 518 million users, with a Facebook and Instagram being the most popular social networking sites, majority of the users are 18 to 24 years age group (Keelery, Number of social network users India 2015-2040, 2021). Social networking sites and social media have become an essential and integral part of Indian youth and have had a steady growth in social networking penetration in recent years. Indian youth spend an average of 6 hours and 36 mins on Internet and an average of 2 hours 25 mins on social media and social networking sites, a cross platform social networking is common among the Indian youth, with YouTube is most used social media platform in 2021 with 85.80%, Facebook is most used social networking

site in 2021 with 75.70% of the total SNS users in India, Instagram(70.60%), twitter(50.60%) and LinkedIn(37.70%) (India Social media Statistics 2021, 2022).

Research into social networking site addiction (i.e., excessive, and compulsive or passive social networking) and its implications on the mental health and wellbeing of the SNS user have been studied in the European and American context; there are few studies that investigate the aspect of social networking usage and its effect on the psychological wellbeing among the rural and urban Indian youth. Theoretical and empirical studies suggest that SNS addiction is moulded by several factors: such as dispositional, sociocultural, and behavioural reinforcement, and empirical findings suggest that SNS addiction is related to poor health and well-being (C.S.Anderson, 2015). Social networking sites are predominantly used for maintaining established offline social networks; However, recent studies suggest that individuals may feel compelled to maintain their online social networks in a way that will lead to using SNSs excessively further researchers suggest that the excessive use of new technologies (and especially online social networking) may be particularly problematic to young people (Griffiths, 2013) as they search for technologies. Moreover, mechanisms to cope with the heightened levels of social validation among the peers.

Although social networking can provide a sense of community, that plays a significant role in the online social interaction process for generating shared emotional experiences (Zhang, 2010). Users tend to engage in highly positive self-representation online (Vogel & Rose, 2016) because of seeing others' posts that depict positive social events (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). Thus, browsing content may exacerbate the tendency to perceive that others have better social lives than oneself (Whillans, Chelsea, Sarah, Alexander, & Frances, 2018). In addition, the physical appearance of the individual's posts in the form of selfies is altered through filter mechanisms available on social networking sites, which could have implications for passive SNSs Users' self-perceptions in terms of self-perceived physical attractiveness (Fradouly & Vartanian, 2016). Exposure to this type of content may be harmful as they evoke harmful social comparisons and activate feelings of missing out, which impact the psychological wellbeing of the user (Burnell, George, Vollet, Ehrenreich, & Underwood, 2019).

A Canadian study that analyzed how demographic factors affect social Networking site (SNS) adoption demonstrated that access to the Internet affects existing inequalities in society with income, education, rural/urban, immigration status, and age adoption patterns. Further, the inequality in access to the Internet mimics the level of online activity of Internet and SNS users (Haight, Haase, & Corbett, 2014). Studies that investigated social networking usage and psychological wellbeing implied that passive SNSs usage leads to social comparison and social comparison leads to symptoms like depression and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), impacting psychological wellbeing negatively (Burnell, George, Vollet, Ehrenreich, & Underwood, 2019). The current study does not consider active or passive social networking usage to study its relation to psychological wellbeing. The amount of time spent on SNSs is taken as a social networking usage to study its relation to psychological wellbeing.

The current research was to explore the relationship between the social networking usage and various aspects of the psychological wellbeing measured using the Ryffs 18 item scale, and the study gains further significance as it examines how the relationship varies among the rural, urban, and semi-urban Indian youth.

2. Aims

The impact of social networking sites is felt on various aspects of the life of the users, especially on youth; studies revealed that there is a positive relationship between online social presence on SNS, social wellbeing and academic performance (sarminath Samad, 2019), Further posting text and online and usage of emoticons on Facebook and the relation to emotional wellbeing is vital for the younger group (Marengo, 2015), and The impact of SNS usage is both positively and negatively related to the users psychological well-being (Seyedezahra Shadi Erfani, 2018). There are studies that investigated the impact of social networking sites on Indian youth in general (Akashdeep Bhardwaj, 2017), but there are no studies that investigated the relationship between SNS usage and psychological wellbeing among the Indian youth. The present study aims to reveal how place of stay (i.e., rural, urban and semi-urban) affects the relationship between social networking usage and the psychological wellbeing of the Indian youth.

3. Theory

Relevant to this study are the theories of social comparison and Curran & Lennon model (J & Lennon, 2011) to examine the relationship between the social networking usage and demographic variable, place of stay and its impact on the psychological wellbeing. Social comparison theory implies that in the absence of objective information, people have an innate drive to compare the self to others, often to obtain an accurate self-evaluation (Festinger, 1954). SNS provide a lot of easily accessible information about others, and can therefore serve as a place for people to engage in social comparison process and can lead to upward social comparison and comparison to others perceived to be better off, thus impairing individual's subjective wellbeing if these comparisons lead to negative feelings such as feelings of depression, envy or resentment (Smith, 2000). The study also employs an updated version of the Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model (Brand, et al., 2019) to understand the relationship between social networking usage and various aspects of psychological wellbeing.

4. Hypotheses

The hypotheses are presented based on the theory and the literature presented. The general trend in these hypotheses is that the relationship between social networking usage and level of psychological wellbeing varies according to the place of stay, i.e., urban, rural, and semi-urban.

H1A: Social networking sites Usage has significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of urban Indian youth.

H10: Social networking sites Usage has no impact on the psychological wellbeing of urban Indian youth.

H2A: Social networking sites Usage has significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of semi-urban Indian youth.

H20: Social networking sites Usage has no significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of semi-urban Indian youth.

H3A: Social networking sites Usage has significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of rural Indian youth.

H30: Social networking sites Usage has no significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of rural Indian youth.

5. Method

Participant and Procedure

The present study used a subset of measures drawn from a larger project. Data were obtained via an online survey; the survey questionnaire is distributed through google forms, the data is also collected through offline modes. The study was approved through the University's review board. Participants are Telangana youth aged between 18 to 24 years. A non-random snowball sample of 670 participants have completed the survey. We have removed 30 participants for incomplete and duplicate survey entries (based on survey timestamps), and 6 participants for completing a tiny proportion of items. We also removed 5 participants for careless/inattentive responding (with a string of 10 or more consecutive identical responses), like previous estimates and suggestions (Curran, 2016). The resulting sample included 629 participants.

Most participants were Male (53.7%; $n = 338$; sex was coded as: male = 1, female = 2) and average age was 21 years old ($SD = 2$; Min = 18; Max = 24; The breakdown of place of stay included: 56% ($n = 352$) urban, 16.5% ($n = 104$) semi-urban, 27.5% ($n = 173$) rural (given in table 1 below).

6. Measures

In addition to the demographics assessed, we administered the following survey items. Table 1 displays the current sample's coefficient alphas.

7. Social networking usage

The variable social networking usage was measured using a questionnaire consisting of questions related to the amount of time spent on the social networking sites in a day how long they have been using the social networking sites (in years).

8. Ryffs Psychological wellbeing (18-item scale)

(Sirigatti, 2016) Describes the definition of health that existed till the 1980s as somewhat pleonastic and gave the historical and theoretical background of the evolution of the Psychological wellbeing construct over the construct of good mental health used in Psychoanalysis. The Ryffs Psychological Wellbeing scale is widely used in measuring the mental health of both the clinical and general populations with the purpose of testing, prevention and health promotion, and it has been adopted to suit other populations with Cultural backgrounds. Positive psychological wellbeing is considered a critical indicator of good mental health.

In order to assess the mental health of the sample for the study, carol Ryffs 18 item Psychological wellbeing scale is used in the survey questionnaire, which is administered both offline and online forms.

Developed by psychologist carol D. Ryff, the PWD scales are in 84(long form) 54&42(medium form) and 18 item versions, even though 42 item PWB scale is considered more statistically sound than the 18 item (short form) scale (Ryff et al., 2007) it takes longer to administer and makes it unsuitable to include in a survey questionnaire to add to an already lengthy questionnaire which has a significant impact

on the response rate the sample. A shortened version of the 42 item scale (18 items) is used in the survey. The 18 scale consisted of eighteen statements on a seven-point scale where the respondents rate how strongly they agree or disagree based on the multidimensional model of carol Ryff which included questions related to the dimensions of Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The responses are later reverse coded so that higher scores indicate greater wellbeing and lower scores indicate lower wellbeing and then calculate separate subscale scores by summing all items within each subscale.

RESPONSE FORMAT

1 = strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = a little agree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = a little disagree; 6 = somewhat disagree; 7 = strongly disagree.

DURATION

3-5 minutes

READING LEVEL

6th to 8th grade

9. Data Analysis

Initially, Microsoft excel tools are used to organize the data, scrubbing and preliminary analysis. Later, R version 4.1.0 (2021-05-18) is used to refine the data using dplyr (data cleaning), naniar (to assess data missingness), mice (missing data imputation), readr (to read the data), chisq.test (chi-square test) for hypothesis testing, corrplot(correlations), aov (ANOVA) and ggplot2 (boxplots). 6.11% of the sample had missing data. Data were analyzed using for social networking usage in terms of how long they were using it (SNSU1) and how much time do they spend on the social networking sites in a day (SNSU2) and compare it with the subscales of the Ryffs psychological wellbeing and the total psychological wellbeing (PWB) among the rural, urban, and semi urban Indian youth aged between 18 to 25 years, further mean, standard deviation and standard error of the variables(SNSU1, SNSU2 and PWB are calculated using the summary(for descriptive statistics) function in R. ANOVA is used to compare the different levels of psychological wellbeing with the various levels of social networking usage.

This study assumes that the voting intention of an elector in a democratic state largely depends on attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Studying the intention of electors is important to understand because the intentions often lead to actions (Ajzen, 1985). Though attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (PCB) all these variables are part of theory of planned behaviour there is a need to verify these assumptions empirically using a theoretical framework to test its applications in Indian context. The study starts with analysing the demographic structure and characteristics of Indian electors to ensure that the factors like gender, equal participation of all section of electors are not barriers in the process of preferred choices. For a study to apply a theory of planned behaviour the major pre-requisite is that the behaviour is largely in control of the individual who has to exercise the rights. Therefore the researcher has taken into account a time frame of study which has witnessed almost equal voter turnout by male and female in India and also increased participation of the sections of society which were earlier not much active or engaged in the process of election.

Voter turnout for men and women in India is almost equal

Results

Table 1. Descriptive of the sample distribution in the rural, urban, and semi-urban Indian youth

			Place of stay			Total
			Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	
Gender	Male	F	51	60	227	338
		%	8.1%	9.5%	36%	53.7%
	Female	F	122	44	125	291
		%	19.4%	7%	19.8%	46.3%
Total	F	173	104	352	629	
	%	27.5%	16.5%	56%	100%	

Table 2. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and standard error) for the primary variables,

variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error
SNSU1	2.6788	0.989699	0.0394
SNSU2	2.2957	0.760278	0.0303
PWB	57.09379	13.72323	0.5471

Note. SNSU1(how long you have been on SNS?); SNSU2(how much time do you spend on SNSs in a day?); psychological wellbeing (PWB).

Table 3. chi-square results for the total sample(N=629) for SNSU1 and SNSU2

Variable	SNSU1			SNSU2		
	df	x ²	p-value	df	x ²	p-value
PWB	228	254.53	0.1097	228	246.22	0.1942
AT	54	90.728	0.001297	54	67.588	0.1012
EM	51	82.388	0.003517	51	56.724	0.2702
PG	54	63.821	0.1694	54	62.426	0.2017
PR	54	71.01	0.6014	54	61.194	0.2884
PL	54	63.238	0.1825	54	59.303	0.2884
SA	54	80.462	0.01126	54	80.099	0.01208

Note. SNSU1(how long you have been on SNS?); SNSU2(how much time do you spend on SNSs in a day?); Total psychological wellbeing (PWB); AT=Autonomy; EM=Environmental Mastery; PG=Personal Growth; PR=Personal relationship with others; PL=Purpose in Life; SA=Self-Acceptance.

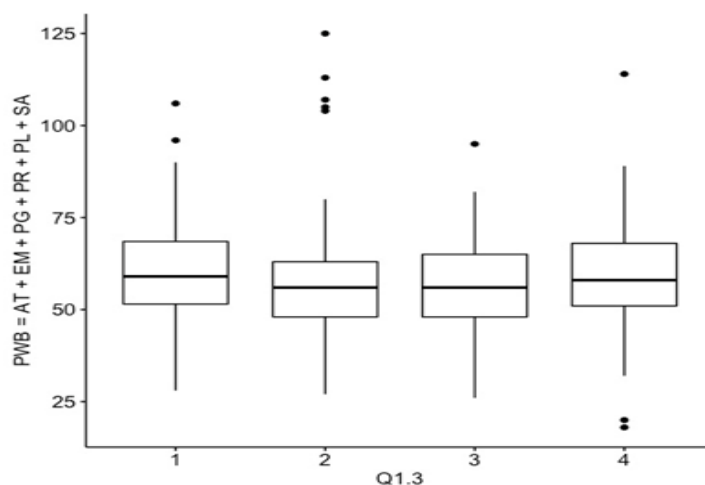


Figure1. boxplot for Q1.3(SNSU1) and PWB for Urban Indian youth

Notes. Q1.3=how long you have been on SNSs (in years); Total psychological wellbeing (PWB); AT=Autonomy; EM=Environmental Mastery; PG=Personal Growth; PR=Personal relationship with others; PL=Purpose in Life; SA=Self-Acceptance.

Table 4. chi-square results for the impact of SNSU1 and SNSU2 on PWB and its subscales for the urban, rural, and semi-urban Indian youth.

Variable	SNSU1									SNSU2								
	UR			SU			RU			UR			SU			RU		
	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p
AT	51	93.906	0.0002	48	68.22	0.02	48	41.73	0.12	51	54.4	0.346	48	62.75	0.07	48	56.18	0.19
EM	51	74.018	0.0192	36	33.45	0.5	42	54.76	0.08	51	57.4	0.249	36	27.10	0.8	42	56.7	0.06
PG	51	65.267	0.0863	42	58.74	0.044	48	42.78	0.68	51	45.3	0.696	42	30.73	0.9	48	63.8	0.06
PR	54	48.94	0.6694	48	54.08	0.3	42	62.21	0.009	54	59.973	0.268	48	54.66	0.2	42	60.19	0.033
PL	54	45.94	0.7969	48	52.15	0.2	45	62.21	0.04	54	53.13	0.507	48	46.86	0.51	45	57.66	0.09
SA	54	61.349	0.2294	42	47.53	0.2	45	66.21	0.02	54	61.95	0.213	42	40.99	0.51	45	50.35	0.26
PWB	255.94	195	0.0022	114	116.48	0.417	159	143.1	0.8	223.2	195	0.084	114	122.8	0.26	159	192.8	0.03469

Note. SNSU1(how long you have been on SNS?); SNSU2(how much time do you spend on SNSs in a day?); Total psychological wellbeing (PWB); AT=Autonomy; EM=Environmental Mastery; PG=Personal Growth; PR=Personal relationship with others; PL=Purpose in Life; SA=Self-Acceptance; UR=urban, RU= rural; SU=semi-urban.

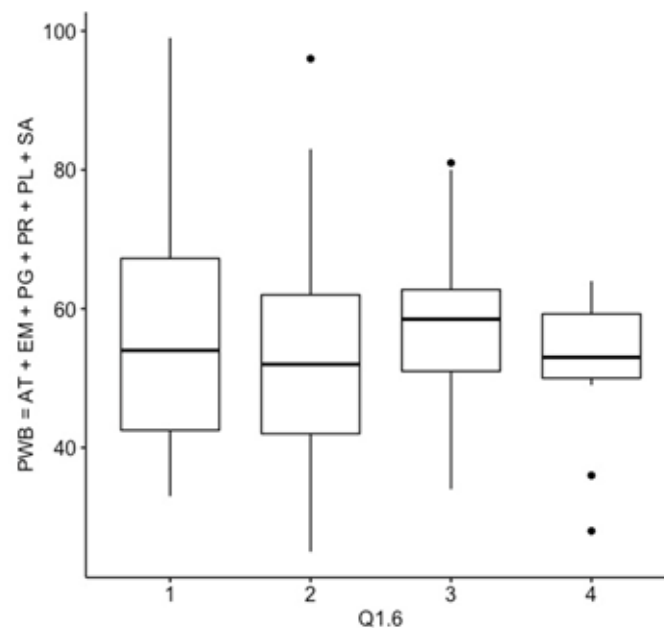


Figure2. boxplot for Q1.6(SNSU2) and PWB for Rural Indian youth

Notes. Q1.6=how much time do you spend on SNS in a day (in hours); Total psychological wellbeing (PWB); AT=Autonomy; EM=Environmental Mastery; PG=Personal Growth; PR=Personal relationship with others; PL=Purpose in Life; SA=Self-Acceptance.

Descriptive statistics are reported in table 1 and table 2 for the total sample. Chi-square test is conducted to test the relation between SNS Usage and Total Psychological wellbeing. no significant relation between the variables is found, χ^2 (228, N =629) =254.53, $P = 0.1097 > 0.05$ for SNSU1 and χ^2 (228, N =629) =246.22, $P = 0.1942 > 0.05$ for SNSU2 (Table 3), how long they have been on SNS? (SNSU1) has a significant relation to the subscales of Environmental mastery(EM) χ^2 (51, N =629) = 82.388, $P = 0.003517 < 0.05$.and self-acceptance(SA) χ^2 (54, N =629) = 80.462 , $P = 0.01126 < 0.05$. How much time you spend on social networking sites in a day?(SNSU2) has a significant relation to the subscale of self-acceptance(SA) χ^2

(54, N =629) =80.099 , $P = 0.01208 < 0.05$ (Table 3).

The hypothesis test results for the rural, urban, and semi-urban youth of India are reported in table 4. To test hypothesis 1A, chi-square test of independence is used to test the impact of the amount of time spent on social networking sites in a day (SNSU2) has no significant impact on the total psychological wellbeing among the urban Indian youth (Table 4) χ^2 (195, N =352) =223.29, $P = 0.08040 > 0.05$. whereas how long you have been using SNSs?(SNSU1) has a significant impact on the total psychological well-being(PWB) of the Urban Indian youth χ^2 (195, N =352) =225.94 , $P = 0.002218 < 0.05$ and has significant impact on the subscales of Autonomy(AT) χ^2 (51, N =352)

=93.906, $P = 0.0002385 < 0.05$ and Environmental mastery(EM) $\chi^2 (51, N =352) =74.018$, $P = 0.01926 < 0.05$.

To test hypothesis 2A, chi-square test of independence is used to test the impact of amount of time spent on social networking sites in a day (SNSU2) has no significant impact on the total psychological wellbeing $\chi^2 (114, N =104) =122.85$, $P = 0.269 > 0.05$ and on the subscales among the semi-urban Indian youth (Table 4). how long you have been using SNSs?(SNSU1) also has no significant impact on the total psychological well-being(PWB) of the semi-urban Indian youth $\chi^2 (114, N =104) =116.48$, $P =0.417 > 0.05$ but has significant impact on the subscales of Autonomy(AT) $\chi^2 (48, N =104) =68.22$, $P = 0.02 < 0.05$ and Personal Growth (PG) $\chi^2 (42, N =104) =58.745$, $P = 0.044 < 0.05$.

To test hypothesis 3A, chi-square test of independence is used to test the impact of amount of time spent on social networking sites in a day (SNSU2) has significant impact on the total psychological wellbeing $\chi^2 (159, N =173) =192.87$, $P = 0.03469 < 0.05$ and on the subscale of Personal relationship with others (PL) $\chi^2 (42, N =173) =60.197$, $P = 0.033 < 0.05$ among the Rural Indian youth (Table 4). how long you have been using SNSs?(SNSU1) also has no significant impact on the total psychological well-being(PWB) of the Rural Indian youth $\chi^2 (159, N =173) =143.12$, $P =0.9 > 0.05$ but has significant impact on the subscales of Personal relationship with others(PR) $\chi^2 (42, N =173) =62.218$, $P = 0.009 < 0.05$ and Purpose in Life (PL) $\chi^2 (45, N =173) = 62.218$, $P = 0.04 < 0.05$ and Self-Acceptance(SA) $\chi^2 (45, N =173) = 66.221$, $P = 0.02 < 0.05$.

There was no significant association found with and between the groups of varied social networking usage and the different levels of psychological wellbeing and the subscales of Autonomy (AT), Environmental Mastery(EM), Personal Growth(PG), Positive Relations with Others(PR), Purpose in Life(PL) and Self-Acceptance(SA).

10. Discussion

The relationship between social networking usage and psychological wellbeing is tested at various levels. 1) social networking usage is considered at two levels a) how long (in terms of years) the user is there on the SNSs and b) how much time the user is spending on SNSs in a day. 2) Psychological wellbeing (PWB) is taken as the total psychological wellbeing and the impact on the subscales (Autonomy (AT), Environmental Mastery (EM), Personal Growth (PG), Positive Relations with Others (PR), Purpose in Life (PL) and Self-Acceptance (SA). 3) the relationship between SNS usage and PWB are studied and compared among the rural, semi-urban and urban Indian youth. We found that the amount of time spent on social networking sites does not have any impact on the total psychological wellbeing of the youth but has an impact on the subscales of Environmental Mastery and Self-acceptance for how long they have been using SNSs and On the subscale of Self-acceptance for how much time the user spends on SNSs in a day.

Hypotheses are tested for the rural, urban and semi-urban Indian youth aged between 18-24 years to test the significance of the relationship between social networking usage and psychological wellbeing. A significant relationship was found between social networking usage (SSU2) and total psychological wellbeing among the rural Indian youth in support of H3A and rejected the null hypothesis H30. There is no significant relationship found between social networking usage (SNSU1 and SNSU2) and total psychological wellbeing for the

semi-urban youth of India, but how long they have been using social networking sites has a significant impact on the Autonomy and personal growth of the Indian youth. For the urban Indian youth, how long they have been using social network sites has a significant impact on the total psychological wellbeing. It significantly impacted the Autonomy and environmental mastery of the individual. The amount of time spent on SNS in a day for the urban Indian user did not significantly impact total psychological well-being and any of its subscales.

The box plot for Urban Indian youth comparing the scores of total psychological wellbeing and responses of how long they have been on SNS? (SNSU1) are shown (figure 1). The boxplot shows that youth who have been using SNS for more than one year and less than five years has lower psychological wellbeing compared to the people who have been using SNSs for less than one year and more than five years in the Urban India.

The box plot for Rural India youth comparing the scores of total psychological wellbeing and responses of how much you spend on SNSs in a day? (SNSU2) are shown (figure 1). The boxplot shows that youth who use SNSs for less than five years but more than one year and have higher psychological wellbeing, and people who are using SNSs for more than one year have less psychological wellbeing than others.

It is worth noting that the amount of time spent on social networking sites and how long they have been on social networking sites is impacting the psychological wellbeing of the rural and urban Indian youth differently and does not shown any impact on the semi-urban youth of India.

Limitations include using a sample of college-going students, which may not generalize to the general population. The collection of data was cross-sectional, and causality cannot be inferred. Additionally, we relied on self-reported measures for the Ryff's scale measures. The gendered digital divide is not considered and becomes a limitation as studies report that the divide is most significant in the states of West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The lack of previous studies investigating the aspects of SNS Usage and Psychological wellbeing in India before the covid-19 also becomes a limitation for the current study. Further impact of the covid-19 pandemic on psychological wellbeing and other extraneous factors are other limitations of the study.

11. Conclusion

Although the various aspects of social networking usage, such as passive social networking usage and social networking usage and its relation to the psychological wellbeing along with the mediating factors, are well established in the west. Not many studies have been conducted due to the apparent digital divide in India. There are very few studies investigating the impact of social networking sites on psychological wellbeing on the rural and urban population. The current study provides an initial insight (albeit based on self-report surveys only in the Indian sample) demonstrated that amount of time spent on social networking sites in a day and how long they have been using social networking sites impact the psychological wellbeing differently for the urban, rural, and semi-urban populations of the India. Results further our understanding of the social networking usage patterns and their impact on various aspects of the psychological wellbeing of the urban, rural, and semi-urban youth of India. Future research could benefit from further examining the mediating variables and other factors, such as how the gendered digital divide influences social networking

usage patterns and how it impacts the mental health of the different users.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

Funding acknowledgment: The author has not received any grant or financial support for this research.

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