

# USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AFFECTS THE ANXIETY LEVEL AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

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## Abstract:

Internet usage among students comprises not only the use of leisure time, but also their community involvement and social networking. Student communities are now facing major social issues like isolation, thus pulling down their cultural values by accessing the virtual sites. This study attempts to explore the effect of time spent on internet and its relationship in giving rise to anxiety among Adolescents and Young adults. This study was conducted in school and college going students of Kolkata (urban area). To collect data 240 adolescents both male and female (13-18 yrs) and 240 young adults both male and female (20-25 yrs ) were selected randomly and then were further divided according to the time spent on internet. The data has been collected through administering questionnaire Brief symptom Inventory and a survey question was asked "How often do you use internet?" Findings of the study shows that the young adults and adolescents uses internet daily and more than 4 hrs were high on anxiety than compared to the non-user or rarely use group.

**Keywords:** Internet usage, Anxiety, young adults, adolescents, time spent

## 1. Introduction

The Internet has enabled new arrangements of social interaction; this is due to its extensive usability and access. In most third world countries use of the internet has been made even more accessible by mobile phones. Most people use the internet to access news, weather and sports reports, to plan and book vacations and to find out more about their interests. Today people are using the internet mostly to on social media, they chat, message, share photos and stay in touch with friends and relatives worldwide. Among the new forms of social interactions that have been enabled by the internet are social networking sites. Social networking communities are here to stay .They have been popular since the year 2002 and have attracted and fascinated teens of millions of Internet users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social network sites (SNSs) such as Friendster, CyWorld, Face book and MySpace allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. Participants may use the sites to interact with people they already know offline or to meet new people.

Each user of a SNS has a profile so as to enable him /her to be able to link up with other users. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interests with people in their network (Wikipedia). Facebook, for example enables its users to present themselves in an online profile, accumulate "friends" who can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles. Facebook members can also join virtual groups based on common interests, see what classes they have in common, and learn each other' hobbies, interests, musical tastes, and romantic relationship status through the profiles. (Ellison, N.et al 2007).

It is also possible to find existing acquaintances, to allow communication among existing groups of people. Sites like LinkedIn foster commercial and business connections. YouTube and Flickr specialize in users' videos and photographs. Teens mostly use the Internet for entertainment and for communicating with friends and family. They use social networking sites and to create profiles on those sites (Jones, Fox, 2009). They send instant messages on chat and keep updating each other on what is happening in their circles of friendship. Due to their nature of allowing people to share common interests, photos and linking up, people are spending many hours on the social networking sites. The most affected group is the youths and especially high school students who are in their teenage years. This research looks into the impact of the social networking sites affecting the anxiety level among teens and adults.

Usage of Social networking sites has many advantages but the overuse of it brings many psychological problems. The added stress and anxiety that large cyber social networks bring has been well illustrated in a study by (Marin, Durand, Wan N et al., 2016) at Harvard. They found that after controlling for other relevant factors such as sex, age, time of awakening, perceived stress and perceived social support, the larger your Facebook network, the greater your diurnal cortisol production. Higher awakening cortisol levels are associated with chronic stress and worry, burnout, and are a vulnerability factor for depression. The authors of this study speculated that the number of Facebook friends you have might be positive up to a point, and offer social reassurance and social support, but after this optimum level is passed, this may switch social support into social pressure and lead to increased stress and higher cortisol levels.

Another study conducted by (Marche S, 2012) found that social media such as Facebook have become surrogates for seeking connectedness, and as a consequence our connections grow broader but shallower. But over use of social media to chase connectedness may merely make us feel more disconnected and lonelier. For example, feelings of disconnectedness are associated with passive interactions with Facebook, such as using it only to update your own activities or merely scanning the activities of friends. If you log on to Facebook every day like more than half of all Facebook users in the world do, and you use it in this passive way, it will merely reinforce your feelings of disconnectedness.

## **2. Purpose of the study:**

The basic objective of conducting this research is to showcase how internet is affecting adolescents and young pupil life. The present study focused upon young people life and their ways of using internet. This study also emphasis upon the behavioral changes which are mainly reported or observed.

### *2.1 Objectives:*

- To determine whether the usage of internet escalate the symptoms of Anxiety among adolescents and young people.

## **3. Methodology:**

This paper incorporates the qualitative approach towards the research objectives. Sampling has been done effectively and tools administered were mainly questionnaires.

### *3.1 Hypothesis:*

**H01:** *There will be a significant difference in the level of Anxiety among the groups (Adolescents) A, B, C, D, E, & F.*

**H02:** There will be significant difference in the level of Anxiety among the groups (Young Young adults) A, B, C, D, E, & F.

### 3.2 Sampling:

A total of 480 participants (male and female) were included in the study. The study was mainly conducted in Schools of Kolkata, Urban Area. To collect data 240 adolescents both male and female (13-18 yrs) and 240 young adults both male and female (20-25 yrs ) were selected randomly and then were further divided according to the time spent on internet .Population was divided according their group and then Brief Symptom Inventory was administered.

### The following group has been formed according to the age:

-Age Group I (Adolescents): 13 to 18 years

-Age Group II (Young adults): 20 to 25 years

### According to the usage of Internet groups were divided:

**Group A:** use more than 4 hour daily

**Group B:** use 2-3 hour daily

**Group C:** use less than 1 hour daily

**Group D:** use more than once a week but not daily

**Group E:** use once a week

**Group F:** Do not use

### 3.3. Inclusion criteria:

- Between the age range of 13-16 yrs and 20-25 yrs
- Minimum educational qualification studied middle school
- Able to read ,write and understand English
- Resides in Kolkata urban area
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### 3.4.Tools administered:

❖ **Socio demographic sheet:** this has been developed by the researcher to gather socio demographic data to take it in to account for elaborative discussion and interpretation of results.

❖ **Brief Symptom Inventory:** The BSI was developed by Derogatis and Melisaratos, 1983.It is a 53 item self-report symptom inventory that assesses nine patterns of clinically relevant psychological symptoms.

- **One question was asked to all the participants was:**

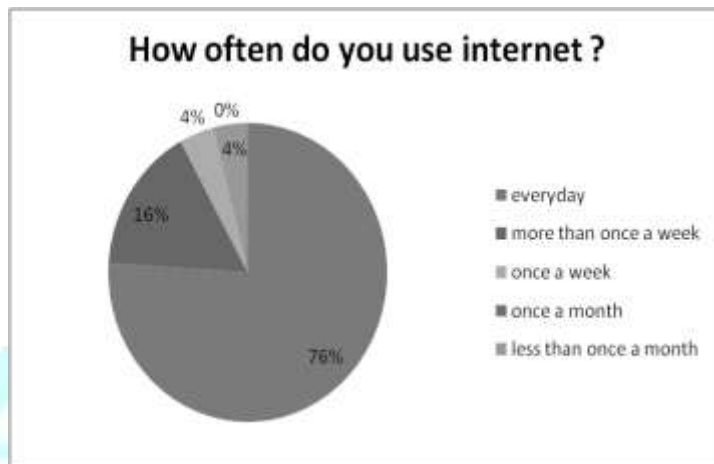
**“How often do you use internet?”**

### 3.5 Statistical Techniques:

-Descriptive Survey, one way Annova was applied to analyze the data in this research work.

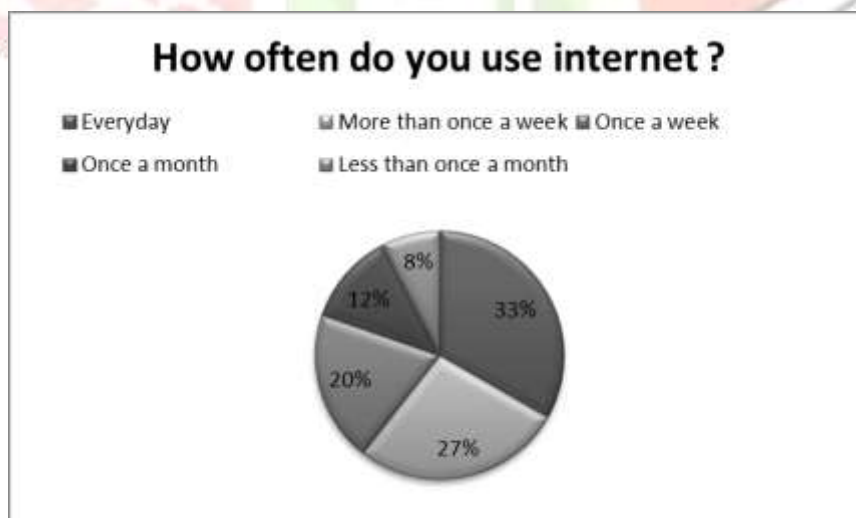
- SPSS version 20 was used.

#### 4. Result :



**Fig.: 01**

The study shows that 76% of students (adolescents) use internet almost every day, 16% uses internet more than once in a week, 4% uses internet once in a week and once in a month.



**Fig. :02**

The study shows that 33% of students (Young Adults) use internet almost every day, 27% uses internet more than once in a week, 20% uses internet once in a week, 12% uses once a month and only 8% uses less than once in a month.

**H01-There will be a significant difference in the level of Anxiety among the groups (Adolescents) A, B, C, D, E, & F.**

### ANOVA table for ANXIETY

Table. : 01

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Level of significance
Between Groups	19749.63	5	3949.92	38.45	.00	Significant at.05
Within Groups	24035.55	234	102.71			
Total	43785.18	239				

Table.: 02

### Descriptive Data:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1	40	58.35	8.34	1.31
2	40	53.60	9.21	1.45
3	40	52.05	9.21	1.45
4	40	41.82	11.13	1.75
5	40	37.70	11.43	1.80
6	40	33.32	11.05	1.74
Total	240	46.14	13.53	.87

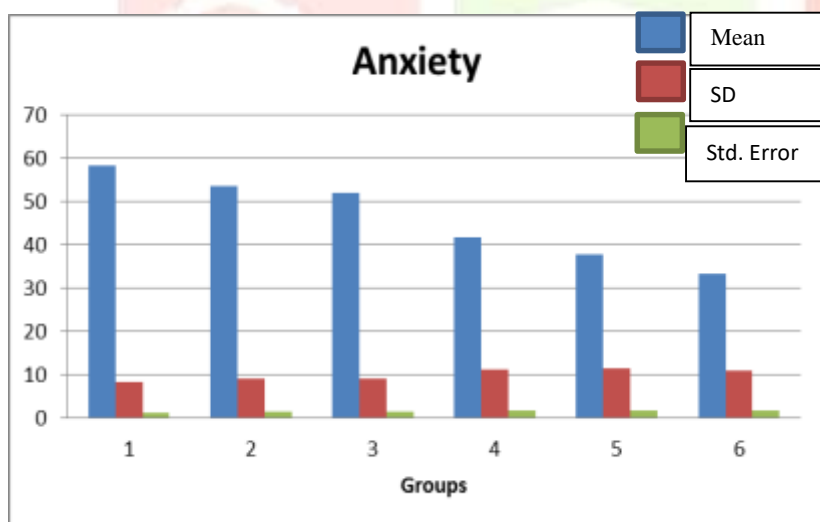


Fig.:03

**H02- There will be a significant difference in the level of Anxiety among the groups (Young adults) A, B, C, D, E, & F.**

ANOVA table for ANXIETY

Table.:03

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Level of significance
Between Groups	36404.68	5	7280.93	60.741	.00	Significant at .05
Within Groups	28049.05	234	119.86			
Total	64453.73	239				

Table.:04

Descriptive Data:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1.00	40	55.60	10.05	1.58
2.00	40	50.90	10.30	1.62
3.00	40	43.72	15.64	2.47
4.00	40	35.12	10.20	1.61
5.00	40	24.70	8.69	1.37
6.00	40	23.15	9.34	1.47
Total	240	38.86	16.42	1.06

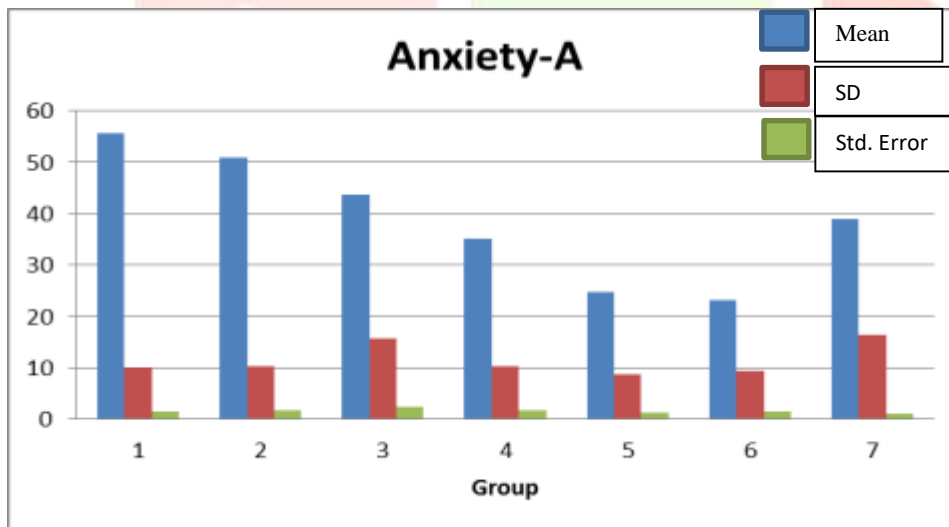


Fig.:04

## 5. Discussion and Interpretation

The internet usage has somehow taken away the privacy from everyone's lives. Mostly people are seen engrossed in a virtual world. It has also been observed that people get anxious if they are not checking their phones for 10 minutes. A flash of message make people restless to check it.

In the present study it has been originated that the group of teenagers and young adults use internet on daily basis for more than 3-4 hrs become more anxious than compared to the non-user groups. It was also observed that much difference has not been found between the user groups i.e., using 4 hrs a day, using 2-3 hrs a day among adolescents and Young adults. The finding is hereby supported by the research conducted by (Koc & Gulyagci, 2013) which states that overuse of Social networking sites leads to development of various physical symptoms as well as depression and anxiety. A research conducted by (Kontos et al., 2010) stated that young adults who started using the Internet earlier in life were more likely to show higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to young adults who started using the Internet later in life.

Whereas while comparing the means of young adults it was found that the non-users mean was higher than compared to rarely user group i.e., (uses less than half an hr. a day). It might be because face –face communication incorporates of lot of anxiety provoking factors such as –facial expressions, bodily appearance and etc., which can be avoided if an individual, is communicating with others at virtual level. Hence, this finding was supported by the study conducted by (Caplan 2007, McKenna and Bargh 2000) which states that virtual environments causes social anxiety with an opportunity to hide and control anxiety symptoms such as sweating, stammering, shaking or blushing during social situations. On the same lines a research conducted by (Shaw 2015) stated that people tend to choose less risky virtual environments in which they can control the communication and use them passively. For this reason, these people are likely to prefer using Facebook since they have more control over the situations that otherwise make them anxious in real life. The finding was supported by the study conducted by (Orr et al. 2009, Ryan and Xenos 2011, Weidman et al. 2012), (McKenna et al. 2002, Valkenburg et al. 2005) which states that adolescents tend to use virtual world in order to cater their social needs that they cannot fulfill in reality.

While taking an interview with participants it was originated that Non user (young adults) priorities and responsibilities are different with that of adolescents. Young adults said that their primary concerns are to focus on their careers than using a Social media whereas Adolescents said that they are “*enjoying their life*” because they are in a safe zone (school). They don’t have much tension now in life as compared to their seniors. During a discussion many adolescents shared that they become very anxious or tensed when they don’t see their phone beside them immediately after waking up in the morning. Whereas, some of the Young Adults shared that they feel very uneasy when any they see others posting pictures of vacations and other events. So, sometimes they use the “*click to post*” method which is they just go out or arrange a get together to post it on the Social Networking Sites.

### **Conclusions:**

The exploration has not been conclusive; it sways towards the some symptoms of addiction and anxiety then also corrects itself. In the present study effect of using Social Networking websites frequently on mental and health deterioration, was discussed. The students should be informed of the liabilities associated with using social networking sites and should be advised to use them cautiously. The insight of the youth is also depicted in the fact that in the wake of some circumstances, they are ready to be monitored but feel that the Government should do it within limits.

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