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# The impact of social networking on adolescents

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## Abstract

**Background:** Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Facebook and WhatsApp, etc. has a great influence on young minds across the globe. Nowadays, SNSs are one of the most growing media of communication among rural and urban adolescents. The study was conducted to assess the knowledge of adolescents on the impact of social networking in selected rural and urban schools, Bangalore. **Objective:** The objective was to compare and assess the level of knowledge of adolescents in selected urban and rural schools about the impact of social networking. **Method:** A descriptive study was conducted and structured knowledge questionnaire on the impact of social networking were administered on 120 students in rural and urban schools using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. The collected data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics and interpreted in terms of objectives and hypothesis of the study. An independent t-test was done to compare rural and urban adolescents' knowledge scores. **Results:** It was observed that the majority of the samples from rural (78.3%, 47 out of 60) and urban (53.3%, 32 out of 60) had inadequate knowledge regarding the impact of social networking. When a paired 't' test was done to compare the knowledge scores, the obtained 't' value 6.25 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. **Conclusion:** Social media plays a significant role in an adolescent's day to day life; therefore, it is important to monitor their knowledge regarding social interactions and their impact on their academic performance, physical health and psychological health.

**Key words:** Academic performance, impact, knowledge, physical health, psychological health, rural adolescents, social media, social networking sites, urban adolescents

## Introduction

Across the human life span, just like the search for food and water, the pain of unmet social needs and social isolation has brought humans to the search for social connection. With the arrival of online social media, people are becoming increasingly interested in the lives, feelings, thoughts and whereabouts of their peers, family and friends, and general social connections. Technology reduces human talent to a certain extent. Children forget even to dream with the hackneyed use of technology.

According to the Pew Research Centre, Washington, DC USA (2015), 36% of people who have smartphone use apps like WhatsApp, Kik or i-Message, while on other hands, 17% of people use apps that automatically delete sent messages like Snapchat or Wickr. Most of these kinds of apps are particularly popular among the adolescent. According to a survey by Lenhart L et al. (2012), it was found that about 95% of adolescents use the internet, most of these adolescents (81%) use social media sites. Facebook is the most trending adopted social site, with 94% of adolescents reporting that they all are a member of Facebook and have an individual

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profile. Twitter and Instagram come after Facebook, but both have made impressive growth during the past years. It was found that 12% of adolescents used Twitter in 2011, but its usage doubled to 26% in 2012. Although Instagram does not appear to have been measured high in 2011, still it comes in third place at 11%.

A qualitative study was done on the impact of SNSs on Indian youth, randomly selected 100 students from school and colleges who were the users of SNSs. The study showed that 98% of the students were members of Orkut and 54% were members of more than one social networking site. Around 95% of the students spent varying amounts of time between 1 to 5 hours on social networking sites, 48% of users used these sites to maintain existing contacts and while other 42% used to make friends based on their likeness. It is evident that youngsters have been addicted to social media at higher levels (Neelamalar, 2009).

A survey was conducted on the effects of social networking on adolescent education among 150 samples in four schools. The majority of the students (400, 70.3%) used social networking for four hours or less. Around 362 (67 %) students responded that this social networking has no impact on them while 28 (5%) of the students did not respond at all. However, 91 (16%) reported that it was helping and while for 68 (12%) it was hurting. Around 68 (12%) of the students have accepted being the victims of cyberbullying while 472 (83 %) of them have not experienced cyberbullying (Miah, et al., 2012).

Over the past few decades, technology has become increasingly important in the lives of rural and urban adolescents. Even though adolescents are aware of the usage of social networking, there may be some factors among rural and urban adolescents which show an impact on their daily activities like in their academic performance, psychological and physical health. We can conclude that awareness to be provided to students about social networking and the possible consequences of incorrect use of the social network in their daily activities. The objectives of this study were to assess the level of knowledge of adolescents in selected urban and rural schools about the impact of social networking and to compare the knowledge scores of adolescents in

selected urban and rural schools regarding the impact of social networking.

### Materials and methods

A descriptive study was conducted. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select 120 students (60 + 60) from ages 13-15 years from selected urban and rural schools, Bangalore. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on the impact of social networking. Demographic proforma was developed to collect background information regarding age, gender, class, religion, income of the family, the way they access the social networking, duration, time, source and location of using social networking. A structured knowledge questionnaire consisted of general information about social networking, main effects of social networking, the effect on academic performance, an impact on physical health and effect on psychological health with the maximum score of 30. The result of the knowledge scored from the data was graded as inadequate knowledge (<50%), moderately adequate knowledge (51–75%) and adequate knowledge (>75%).

The content validity of the tool was done by 12 experts. The reliability of the tool was established by split-half method; obtained 'r' value was 0.83. The study was conducted after the approval from the Ethical Committee and the Principals of the respective schools. Informed consent of each subject was obtained before starting the data collection with the assurance of anonymity. The study samples consisted of adolescents in the age group of 13-15 years, those who were using SNSs, from the selected urban and rural schools, Bangalore, those who were willing to participate in the study and those who were able to communicate in English or Kannada. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage distribution were done to analyse socio-demographic variables. Mean and standard deviations were computed to assess the knowledge of adolescents regarding the impact of social networking. The Chi-square test was done to determine the association between the mean knowledge scores of rural school and urban school adolescents and their selected socio-demographic variables. The independent 't'-test was used to compare the knowledge scores of adolescents in urban and rural schools regarding the impact of social networking.

**Results**

*Sample characteristics*

The majority of the adolescents in the rural school (30, 50%) and the urban school (37, 61.7%) were in the age group of 14 years. In this study, the majority of the adolescents (31, 51.7%) in the urban school were in the 9th standard, while 21 adolescents in the rural school (35%) were in the 9th standard. The majority of the adolescents in the rural school (46, 76.7%) and the urban school (43, 71.7%) were members of 1-3 SNSs. It was found that the majority of the adolescents in

the rural school (29, 48.37%) and urban schools (37, 61.7%) spent less than 1 hour on SNS. The majority of the adolescents in the rural school (33, 55%) had used pocket money whereas the majority of the adolescents in the urban school (37, 61.7%) had used source of financing from within the family. The majority of the adolescents in the rural school (25, 41.7%) and the urban school (28, 46.7%) used Wi-Fi settings for checking SNS. Some of the other sample characteristics are depicted in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:**  
*Frequency and percentage distribution of sample characteristics*

| Sample Characteristics                             | Category          | (N=60+60)     |                |               |                |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
|  |                   | Rural         |                | Urban         |                |
|  |                   | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
| Age in years                                       | 13 years          | 18            | 30.0           | 13            | 21.7           |
|  | 14 years          | 30            | 50.0           | 37            | 61.7           |
|  | 15 years          | 12            | 20.0           | 10            | 16.6           |
| Gender   | Male              | 21            | 35.0           | 35            | 58.3           |
|  | Female            | 39            | 65.0           | 25            | 41.7           |
| Class  | 8th Standard      | 29            | 48.3           | 20            | 33.3           |
|  | 9th Standard      | 21            | 35.0           | 31            | 51.7           |
|  | 10th Standard     | 10            | 16.7           | 09            | 15.0           |
| Religion   | Muslim            | 43            | 71.7           | 07            | 11.7           |
|  | Christian         | 10            | 66.7           | 13            | 21.7           |
|  | Hindu             | 07            | 11.6           | 36            | 60.0           |
|  | Others            | 0             | 0              | 04            | 06.6           |
| Type of family                                     | Joint             | 14            | 23.3           | 14            | 23.3           |
|  | Nuclear           | 42            | 70.0           | 42            | 70.0           |
|  | Extended          | 04            | 06.7           | 04            | 06.7           |
| Monthly family income (in Rupees)                  | 1,000-5,000       | 30            | 50.0           | 07            | 11.7           |
|  | 5, 001-10,000     | 27            | 45.0           | 03            | 05.0           |
|  | 10, 001-15,000    | 03            | 05.0           | 19            | 31.7           |
|  | Above 15, 001     | 0             | 0              | 31            | 51.6           |
| Number of social networking                        | 1-3               | 46            | 76.7           | 43            | 71.7           |
|  | 4-6               | 3             | 05.0           | 04            | 06.7           |
|  | 7-9               | 11            | 18.3           | 10            | 16.6           |
|  | 10 and above      | 0             | 0              | 03            | 05.0           |
|  | Personal computer | 23            | 38.3           | 17            | 28.3           |
| Access social network account                      | Laptop            | 5             | 08.3           | 14            | 23.3           |
|  | Smart phone       | 25            | 41.7           | 21            | 35.0           |
|  | I-pad/tab         | 7             | 11.7           | 08            | 13.4           |
|  | Less than one     | 19            | 31.7           | 13            | 21.7           |
| Duration of using social networking sites (months) | 1-6               | 17            | 28.3           | 09            | 15.0           |
|  | 6-12              | 13            | 21.7           | 18            | 30.0           |
|  | More than 12      | 11            | 18.3           | 20            | 33.3           |

| Sample Characteristics  | Category           | Rural         |                | Urban         |                |
|---|--------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
|   |                    | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
| Amount of time spent daily on social networking sites (hours)     | Less than 1        | 29            | 48.3           | 37            | 61.7           |
|   | 1 to 3             | 25            | 41.7           | 09            | 15.0           |
|   | 3 to 6             | 6             | 10.0           | 07            | 11.7           |
|   | More than 6        | 0             | 0              | 07            | 11.6           |
| Location of check social networking sites                         | Home               | 24            | 40.0           | 51            | 85.0           |
|   | Cyber Café         | 6             | 10.0           | 05            | 08.3           |
|   | School             | 25            | 41.7           | 01            | 01.7           |
| Source of financing for use of the internet for social networking | Others             | 5             | 08.3           | 03            | 05.0           |
|   | Pocket money       | 33            | 55.0           | 19            | 31.6           |
|   | Within family      | 5             | 8.3            | 37            | 61.7           |
|   | Others             | 22            | 36.7           | 04            | 06.7           |
| Kind of internet network using to access                          | Wireless fidelity  | 25            | 41.7           | 28            | 46.7           |
|   | Internet Broadband | 6             | 10.0           | 18            | 30.0           |
|   | GSM                | 20            | 33.3           | 14            | 23.3           |
|   | Others             | 9             | 15.0           | 0             | 0              |
| Number of times check online profiles                             | Often              | 12            | 20.0           | 13            | 21.7           |
|   | Every few hours    | 22            | 36.7           | 13            | 21.7           |
|   | Once a day         | 21            | 35.0           | 11            | 18.3           |
|   | Few times a week   | 5             | 8.3            | 23            | 38.3           |

*Knowledge of children on the impact of social networking*

The areas of knowledge questionnaire: General information about social networking, main effects of social networking, the effect on academic performance, impact on physical health and effect on psychological health.

Table 2:

*Area wise mean knowledge scores of adolescents in urban school on the impact of social networking*

| N=60   |   |           |            |              |             |
|--------|---|-----------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| S. No. | Knowledge aspects                                   | Items     | Max. Score | Mean         | SD          |
| I      | Social networking                                   | 9         | 9          | 5.27         | 1.38        |
| II     | Main effects on social networking                   | 6         | 6          | 2.85         | 1.10        |
| III    | Impact of social networking on academic performance | 5         | 5          | 2.45         | 1.06        |
| IV     | Impact of social networking on physical health      | 4         | 4          | 1.95         | 1.11        |
| V      | Impact of social networking on psychological health | 6         | 6          | 2.00         | 1.20        |
|        | <b>Combined</b>                                     | <b>30</b> | <b>30</b>  | <b>15.42</b> | <b>3.26</b> |

The mean area wise knowledge score of adolescents in urban schools on the impact of social networking was 58.5% (Table-2). The mean percentage regarding the main effects on social networking in adolescents was 47.5% while the mean percentage regarding the impact of social networking on academic performance was 49%. The mean percentage of knowledge score in adolescents regarding the impact of social networking on physical health was 48.8%.

Table 3:

*Area wise mean knowledge scores of adolescents in the rural school on the impact of social networking*

| N=60  |                                   |       |            |                       |      |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-------|------------|-----------------------|------|
| S. No | Knowledge aspects                 | Items | Max. Score | Respondents Knowledge |      |
|       |                                   |       |            | Mean                  | SD   |
| I     | Social networking                 | 9     | 9          | 4.28                  | 1.54 |
| II    | Main effects on social networking | 6     | 6          | 2.00                  | 1.30 |

| S. No           | Knowledge aspects                                   | Items     | Max. Score | Respondents Knowledge |            |
|-----------------|---|-----------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|                 |   |           |            | Mean                  | SD         |
| III             | Impact of social networking on academic performance | 5         | 5          | 1.87                  | 1.08       |
| IV              | Impact of social networking on physical health      | 4         | 4          | 1.50                  | 0.85       |
| V               | Impact of social networking on psychological health | 6         | 6          | 2.35                  | 1.07       |
| <b>Combined</b> |   | <b>30</b> | <b>30</b>  | <b>12.00</b>          | <b>2.7</b> |

The mean area wise knowledge score of rural adolescents on the impact of social networking was 47.6% (Table-3). The mean percentage regarding the main effects on social networking in adolescents was

33.3% while the mean percentage regarding the impact of social networking on academic performance was 37.3%. The mean percentage of knowledge score in adolescents regarding the impact of social networking on physical health was 37.5%.

The independent ‘t’-test was done to compare the rural and urban adolescents’ knowledge scores. The obtained ‘t’ value 6.25 (Figure 1) was found to be more than the table value (1.96 with 118 df) at 0.05 level of significance. The mean percentages of rural knowledge scores were 40% whereas the urban mean percentage knowledge scores were 51.4%. The obtained ‘t’ value 6.25 was found to be significant at 0.05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted which says that there is a significant difference between knowledge scores of adolescents in rural and urban schools regarding the impact of social networking.

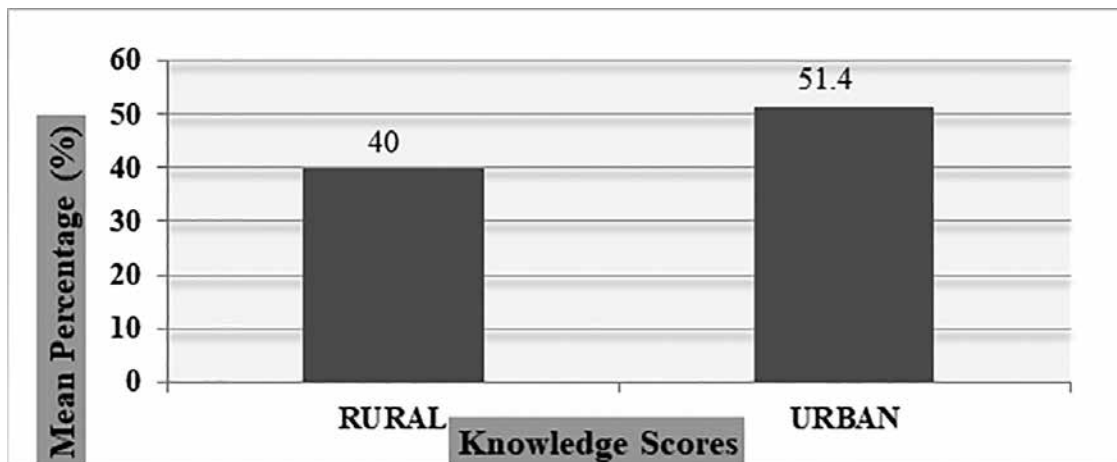


Figure 1: Bar diagram representing the mean knowledge scores of adolescents in rural and urban schools on the impact of social networking

**Table 4:**

Overall comparison of mean knowledge scores of adolescents in the rural and urban schools on the impact of social networking

N=120

| Respondents | Sample (N) | Items | Max. Score | Knowledge Scores |      | 't' Value |
|-------------|------------|-------|------------|------------------|------|-----------|
|             |            |       |            | Mean             | SD   |           |
| Rural       | 60         | 30    | 30         | 12.00            | 2.70 | 6.25*     |
| Urban       | 60         | 30    | 30         | 15.42            | 3.26 |           |

\*Significant at 5% Level, t (0.05, 118df) = 1.96

For general information about social networking, the obtained 't'-value was 3.69 (118df, 1.96) significant at 0.05 level (Table 4). When the main effects of social networking were considered, the obtained 't'-value was 3.86 (118df, 1.96), significant at 0.05 level and the null hypothesis was rejected.

The obtained 't' value for the impact of social networking on academic performance was 2.98 (118df, 1.96) significant at 0.05 level. When the aspect of the impact of social networking on physical health was considered, the obtained 't' value was 2.49 (118df, 1.96), significant at 0.05 level. For the impact of social networking on psychological health, the obtained 't' value was 2.65 (118df, 1.96), significant at 0.05 level.

From this statistical information, it was observed that there was a significant difference in knowledge of adolescents in rural and urban schools regarding the impact of social networking sites in area wise knowledge.

### Discussion

The majority of adolescents in rural school (47, 78.3%) had inadequate knowledge regarding the impact of social networking and the remaining adolescents (13, 21.7%) had moderately adequate knowledge. None of the adolescents who participated in the study had adequate knowledge regarding the impact of social networking. The majority of the adolescents in the urban school (43, 71.7%) had moderately adequate knowledge while seven adolescents (11.7%) had inadequate knowledge regarding social networking. None of the adolescents who participated in the study had adequate knowledge regarding the impact of social networking.

Adolescents in urban school had moderately adequate knowledge as compared to adolescents in the rural school. The study was correlated with the findings of the study conducted by (Razieh Omidi et al., 2014) to compare the knowledge and practice of the rural and urban students regarding violent behaviours. The results showed that the knowledge of students in urban areas is much higher than in rural areas. The study showed that the majority of the respondents had a lack of knowledge about the impact of social networking. The findings of the study suggest that there is an increased need for conducting awareness programs

for adolescence. In this study, it was observed that adolescents in urban school had moderately adequate knowledge than adolescents in the rural school.

In a study conducted to compare the knowledge and practice of the rural and urban students regarding violent behaviours, the results showed that the knowledge of students about violent behaviours in urban areas is much higher than in rural areas. The main study showed that 53.3% adolescents in the urban school had inadequate knowledge scores regarding the impact of social networking sites (Razieh Omidi et al., 2014).

The findings of this study were supported by a comparative study which was conducted on anaemia in urban and rural schools among girls aged 12-16 years. In the study, socio-economic factors showed that in a rural area, education of parents, highest occupation in the family, ownership of apple orchards, type of diet and socioeconomic status made a difference whereas in urban area occupation of the father was associated significantly with anaemia. In this study, the adolescents in the rural schools were associated with socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, class, member of SNSs, access, location and source of financing (Mehta, 2004).

### Conclusion

Social networking has existed since society began. Adolescents are now becoming aware of many harmful effects of SNSs on their personal and educational life. Constant online communications make it difficult for the children to communicate and concentrate when they are off from the screen. It is, therefore, important to closely evaluate the adolescent's knowledge of online social interactions and their impact on their daily activities. In less than five years, we can see more and younger generation on social media sites without knowing the dangerous impact they have to face it in the future when it is misused. Therefore, we need to monitor and control adolescent's daily activities in the SNSs without affecting their academic performance, physical and psychological health and family life.

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