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Predictor variables of mental health among emerging adults

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Abstract

This study investigates predictor variables of mental health among emerging adults. Study was conducted in the Dharwad district of Karnataka State, India. The research, conducted during 2020-21 and around 80 students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year were selected. Mental health inventory by Jagadish and Srivasthava (1983) was used to assess mental health status. Results indicate that majority of the emerging adults had a poor level of mental health and a moderate level of mental health. A very few had a good level of mental health.

Keywords: Predictor variables, mental health, emerging adults

Introduction

Emerging adulthood is a developmental stage that spans the late teens to the twenties, with a concentration on ages 18 to 29 years. It has pushed the start of young adulthood forwards. The rise in the ages of entering higher education, prolonged job instability and marriage reflect the deviations of this new period of life for young people. Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood emerging adults often explore a variety of possible directions. Arnett (2000) ^[1] briefed that individuals in this age have the highest rates of residential instability of any age group and they do not regard themselves as fully mature adolescents or adults. In the course of emerging adulthood, young people explore possibilities and move closer to making enduring choices.

According to World Health Organization report (2004) ^[8] Mental health is defined as person's psychological, emotional and social state of wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, act, handle stress and make choices. It also includes depression, anxiety, hopelessness, disappointment, poor decision making, lack of confidence, unable to concentrate on works and occupied with contradictory thoughts. According to Coyne *et al.* (2019) ^[3] increased usage of social media was linked to online harassment, poor sleep, low self-esteem, body surveillance, rejections, loneliness, depression, anxiety and despair all of which were linked to mental health difficulties. Greater time spent on social media was connected with mental health problems among late teens and emerging adults.

Anderson and Jiang (2018) ^[2] reported that people who deactivated their Face book accounts for a month reported lower depression and anxiety, as well as increased levels of happiness and life satisfaction. Almost two thirds of emerging adults believe that social media has a negative effect. It is a concern for young adults that excessive use of social media sites will definitely affect their mental health status. Another harmful aspect of social media is cyber bullying that occurs online. As many as 72 per cent of teens experienced cyber bullying at some point in life. It is more strongly correlated with suicide attempts than face-to-face bullying. Unlike bullying that takes place in-person, victims of online cyber bullying cannot get away from it which happens without the notice of teachers and parents. This study article investigates the predictor variables of mental health among emerging adults.

Methodology

The sample for the present study consisted of undergraduate students both boys and girls studying in arts and science degree colleges. Eighty students from two arts colleges studying I year and II year and eighty students from two science colleges studying in I year and II year

were selected thus making a final sample of 160 respondents. Inclusion criteria for the selection of sample included emerging adults in age group of 18-25 years attending degree colleges, those who were using android

smart phones and having accounts in social media. Regression was used for statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

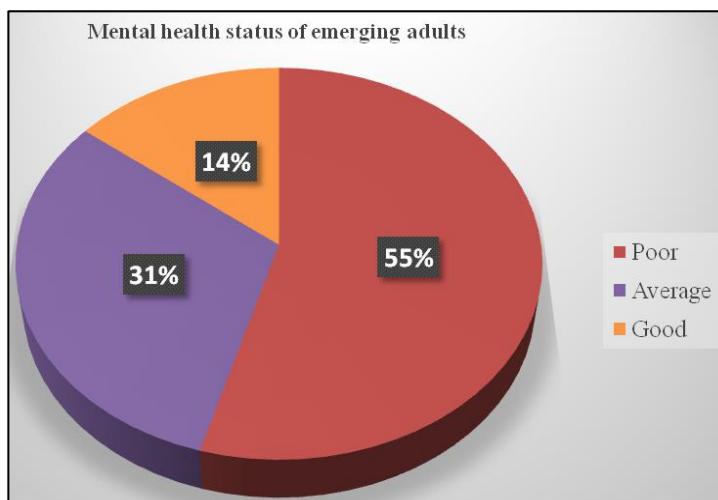


Fig 1: Overall distribution of respondents according to mental health status

Figure 1 presents the overall distribution of emerging adults by their level of mental health. From the figure it can be observed that 55.00 percent of the respondents had poor level of mental health followed by 31 percent had average mental health and 14 percent had good level of mental health. The probable reason could be that high involvement in social media, where respondents expressed that high

social media usage gives negative feelings, puts unrealistic expectations and influencing academics in negative way, emotional imbalance due to increased focus on career choices, family pressures, relationship problems, and financial problems which might have resulted in their poor level of mental health.

Table 1: Predictor variables of mental health (N=160)

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Beta	t- value	Sig.	Beta	t- value	Sig.	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Individual factors									
Age	0.167	2.098	0.038	0.204	2.536	0.012	0.196	2.412	0.017
Gender	0.027	0.334	0.739	0.056	0.694	0.489	0.054	0.664	0.508
Stream	0.053	0.670	0.504	-0.056	-0.539	0.590	-0.086	-0.769	0.443
No. of apps	-0.078	-0.814	0.417	-0.104	-0.940	0.349	-0.099	-0.893	0.373
Time spent	0.037	0.383	0.702	-0.074	-0.731	0.466	-0.061	-0.600	0.550
Familial factors									
Education of father				0.379	2.015	0.046	0.373	1.978	0.050
Education of mother				0.459	1.718	0.088	0.483	1.790	0.075
Occupation of father				-0.436	-2.010	0.046	-0.451	-2.068	0.040
Occupation of mother				0.188	1.479	0.141	0.176	1.369	0.173
Type family				0.293	1.939	0.054	0.278	1.822	0.070
Socio economic status				0.109	1.328	0.186	0.104	1.266	0.207
Social media addiction							-0.270	-3.741	0.015
F- Value	1.235			1.734			1.631		
R value	1.96			0.338			0.343		
R ² Value	0.039			0.114			0.117		

Table 1 highlights the variables that significantly predict mental health of emerging adults. They are individual factors (Model-1), individual & familial factors (Model-2), individual factors, familial factors & social media addiction (Model-3). The hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to predict mental health of emerging adults. In Model-1 individual factors age, gender, stream, number of apps used and time spent were taken which accounted for 3 per cent of variance in mental health of emerging adults. In Model-2 familial factors parents' education, parent's occupation, type of family and SES of family were added to individual factors which brought 11 per cent of variance in mental health of emerging adults.

In Model-3 with addition of social media addiction along with individual and familial factors it remained same with 11 per cent of variance in mental health of emerging adults. Droogenbroeck *et al.* (2018) [4] reported that age is significantly predicting mental health of emerging adults where, the adolescents and young adults had higher anxiety levels, depression, loneliness and psychological distress when compared to other age groups due to identity confusion and lack of proper balance at that particular age of life. Lucas *et al.* (2013) [6] also showed that fathers occupation is significantly predicting mental health status of their children where it was reported that emerging adults whose parent's had high occupational status had better

mental health as compared to those who were Similarly Vandirayi (2018) ^[7] also revealed that emerging adults with parents in low occupations (labourers, agricultural workers) resulted in low mental health than parents who are involved in higher posts (officers and managers).

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that among emerging adult's age, father's education and father's occupation is significantly predicting mental health status of their children. Students also found to have poor overall mental health. So it is necessary to provide them with necessary counselling/intervention to promote good mental health. In order to promote good mental health it is necessary emerging adults should build good and healthy relationships with others, involve in other productive works, learn stress management skills and relaxation techniques, and establish healthy habits.

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