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Research Article

Exploring The Relationship Between Social Networking Engagement, Metacognitive Strategies, And Psychological Well-Being Among College Students During Transition Periods

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the connection between college students' psychological well-being during transitional times, social networking, and metacognition. A sample of 157 college students, aged between 18 and 30, from Punjab, India's public and private colleges answered an online survey. Measures of social networking involvement, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales, and the Metacognition Inventory were all used in the study. A variety of demographic factors were assessed, such as gender, age, level of education, and household income.

Significant positive associations in between using social media and metacognitive strategies and several elements of psychological well-being such positive connections, environmental mastery, personal development, and acceptance of oneself, purpose in life, and autonomy, were found by correlation and regression analysis results. Metacognition, social networking, and psychological well-being have been found to be influenced by demographic characteristics, including gender and family economic status.

The results imply that among college students going through transitional periods, the development of metacognitive abilities and efficient social networking activity management can foster holistic well-being. There is a discussion of the implications of developing focused interventions to improve metacognitive skills and promote responsible social media use. Subsequent studies ought to investigate the long-term effects of these variables on students' adjustment and well-being following significant life changes.

KEYWORDS: college students, psychological well-being, social networking, metacognition, transitional period.

INTRODUCTION

As students move to college they face quite new challenges like adjusting and adapting (or transitioning) to new social groups and academic schedules with a load of responsibility over their shoulders and get the impression of more independence. (Conley et al., 2014). This period results in affecting students' psychological health in ways like causing them increased stress, anxiety, and emotional suffering (Yaffe & Wintre, 2000). It is necessary to consider several factors to comprehend psychological well-being, such as pleasant emotions, self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, and life purpose (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Six crucial elements are highlighted by Ryff's multidimensional model of well-being as being necessary for the best possible psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989). Self-acceptance is one of the elementary components to comprehend psychological well-being and it is defined as having a positive view of oneself and accepting one's past (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Good relationships with others highlight the significance of deep emotional and interpersonal bonds (Ryff & Singer, 1996). The importance of independence from outside forces and self-determination is emphasized by autonomy (Ryff & Singer, 1996). According to Ryff and Singer (1996), environmental mastery is the capacity of an individual to adapt to and flourish in their surroundings, exhibiting competence and control over their environment. A meaningful existence is facilitated

by having well-defined objectives and direction in life (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Ultimately, personal growth stresses continuous improvement and aiming for one's greatest potential (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasizes intrinsic drive, autonomy, and the satisfaction of fundamental psychological needs, broadens our knowledge of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Understanding metacognition, sometimes known as "thinking about thinking," is essential to critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulated learning (Flavell, 1979; Kuhn & Dean, Jr., 2004). While metacognitive regulation is using this information to control cognitive activity, metacognitive knowledge refers to an individual's comprehension of cognitive processes (Flavell, 1979, 1987; Fleming & Lau, 2014). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) offer venues for social connection and information sharing, which has revolutionized social interaction, communication, and community building (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). SNSs are not only boon to the society but also prove to be a curse when they cause psychological issues like social isolation among its users hence it is questionable to use it as it is addictive. (Andreassen et al., 2012).

During transitional phase in college, there is a complex relationship between mental fitness, metacognition of the person and his social interaction. Strong metacognitive abilities may help reduce the detrimental impacts of excessive social media use by enabling efficient SNS usage regulation and critical assessment of online information (Turel & Qahri-Saremi, 2016; Gainsbury & Blaszczynski, 2011). On the other hand, inadequate metacognitive awareness might worsen psychological discomfort and lead to inappropriate SNS usage (Caplan, 2010; Woods & Scott, 2016). To explain about potential causes and implications for intervention and support, this research intends to investigate the complex relationship between social networking involvement, metacognitive methods, affects the mental health of college students during times of transition.

METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

- To assess the differences in metacognition, social networking, and the experience of psychological well-being based on demographic factors in college students.
- To assess the impact of social networking on metacognition and psychological well-being among college students.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant correlation between social networking engagement, metacognitive strategies and psychological well-being.
2. There is significant negative correlation between social networking Engagement and psychological well-being.
3. There is a significant positive correlation between metacognitive strategies and psychological well-being.

Research Design

An online survey was used in this correlational study to collect data from Punjabi college students in India.

Participants and Sample Design

There were 157 college students in the sample, and the distribution of boys (51.6%) and females (48.4%) was fairly equal. The majority of participants were middle-class parents between the ages of 22 and 25. To find participants, cluster random sampling was used.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age Distribution: 72% of respondents comprise ages between 22 and 25. 19.1% samples are of the respondents aged between 18 and 21 and the remaining 8.9% are aged between 26 to 30.

Table no. 1 Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
18-21	30	19.1
22-25	113	72
26-30	14	8.9
Total	157	100

Sex Distribution: The respondents expose a relatively equal proportion of Male (51.6%) and Female (48.4%) gender distribution. This gives an opportunity to do research based on gender variations.

Table no. 2 Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	81	51.6
Female	76	48.4
Total	157	100

Education Qualification: Educational qualification of respondents is reflected 46.1% - Post graduation,49.7% - Graduation and 3.2% - PhD

Table no.3 Education qualification

Education Qualification	Frequency	Percent
1(Graduate)	78	49.7
2(Masters)	74	47.1
3(PHD)	5	3.2
Total	157	100

Family Economic Status: It can be observed through socioeconomic background of the respondents which is as shown as 78.3% have family economic status of "2.0" i.e. they are middle-class, (12.7%) have higher economic standing, (8.9%) have lower economic standing.

Table no.4 Family Economic Status

Family Economic Status	Frequency	Percent
1(Lower)	14	8.9
2(Middle)	123	78.3
3(upper)	20	12.7
Total	157	100

Measures

The following approved tools were employed in the study:

- **Social Networking Addiction Scale by MG. Shahnawaz and Usama Rehman:** This scale gauges an individual's involvement in social networking. The Likert scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse are its six dimensions. There are two approaches to applying the scale, depending on the research or application. If the goal is to identify and research the addiction aspects or if it will be used with patients, a dimension-wise score can be derived by adding the items under each dimension. The sum of all the items can be used to get the final score. There are 21 through 147 possible points. Anything over 84 on the total score indicates addiction.
- **Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales**: There are three different versions of this scale: 84, 42, and 18 items. This 42-item version of the survey measures six established components of well-being and will be used in this investigation: (1) acceptance of oneself; (2) mastery of one's surroundings; (3) personal development; (4) positive interpersonal relationships; (5) purpose in life; and (6) autonomy. Each component consists of seven elements. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement using a 6-point agreement scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 6 represents "strongly agree." Positive and negative items are separated within it. A person's psychological well-being increases with higher scores.
- **Meta cognition inventory by Punita Govil:** The thirty items in the inventory are divided into two categories: regulation of cognitive processes (items 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 29) and understanding of cognitive processes (items 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 22, and 28). For every item, there are four possible answers: "not at all," "somewhat," "to a considerable extent," and "very much so." Every statement is followed by a scale. The respondent's marking on the scale is given a weighting of 1, 2, 3, or 4 points. The total score for every item is obtained by adding the points. Next, the scores are categorized to determine the participant's level of metacognitive comprehension and regulation
- Demographic data on age, sex, education level, and family economic situation were also gathered for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

Table no. 5 GROUP STATISTICS

Category	Mean (Male)	SD	N (Male)	Mean (Female)	SD	N (Female)
Social Networking	84.86	27.682	81	84.29	27.900	76
Metacognition	84.37	18.454	81	80.30	13.000	76
AUTONOMY	25.62	5.330	81	24.74	3.803	76
ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY	25.53	4.159	81	23.61	3.135	76
PERSONAL GROWTH	25.46	4.667	81	25.67	4.568	76
POSITIVE RELATIONS	25.28	4.537	81	23.61	3.799	76
PURPOSE IN LIFE	25.53	5.120	81	25.38	3.666	76
SELF ACCEPTANCE	25.53	4.930	81	25.38	3.666	76

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of characteristics of dataset. Which we have been explained as follows: Given below is the proportion that males and females share in various factors of comprehending psychological well-being:

1. Social Networking/Interaction:
Men - 84.86
Women - 84.29

2. Metacognition:
Men - 84.37
Women - 80.30

3. Autonomy:
Men - 25.62
Women - 24.74

4. Environmental Mastery:
Men - 23.95
Women - 24.49

5. Personal Growth:
Men - 25.46
Women - 25.43

6. Positive Relations:
Men - 25.28
Women - 25.67.

7. Purpose in life:
Men - 24.69
Women - 23.61

8. Self-Acceptance:
Men - 25.53
Women - 25.38

Males have scored slightly higher than Females across all variables except in Positive relations where females have scored higher than males.
The overall mean scores for all genders combined, spanning all dimensions, were between 82.40 and 84.59, suggesting that the sample's psychological well-being was comparatively high. While both genders show generally very high levels of well-being across the examined dimensions, these findings raise the possibility that there are modest disparities between the sexes in some areas of psychological well-being. Additional investigation may be necessary to determine the possible causes of these gender disparities and how they might affect people's general well-being.

Table no. 6 CORRELATION (Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)

VARIABLES	Social Networking	Metacognition	AUTONOMY	ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY	PERSONAL GROWTH	POSITIVE RELATIONS	PURPOSE IN LIFE	SELF ACCEPTANCE
Social Networking	1							
Metacognition	0.060	1						
AUTONOMY	-0.298**	0.341**	1					
ENVIRONMENTAL MASTERY	-0.111	0.323**	0.471**	1				
PERSONAL GROWTH	-0.349**	0.182*	0.513**	0.413**	1			
POSITIVE RELATIONS	-0.285**	0.251**	0.479**	0.536**	0.548**	1		
PURPOSE IN LIFE	-0.278**	0.301**	0.515**	0.306**	0.541**	0.359**	1	
SELF ACCEPTANCE	-0.074	0.497**	0.342**	0.402**	0.220**	0.338**	0.209**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Social Networking:

Positive Relations: $r = -0.285$, $p < 0.01$
Personal Growth: $r = -0.349$, $p < 0.01$
Positive relationships and personal growth seem to be negative correlated with higher levels of social networking. Excessive use of social networking sites seems to hinder people's ability to develop personally and make it more difficult for them to form long-lasting relationships.

Metacognition:

Personal Growth: $r = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$
Purpose in Life: $r = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$
There is a statistically significant correlation between metacognitive processes and both personal growth and purpose in life. In particular, there is a moderate association between metacognitive activities and personal growth, suggesting that people who participate in these activities typically experience higher levels of personal growth. Moreover, there is a larger correlation with life purpose, indicating that metacognitive processes are linked to a clearer sense of purpose in life. These results suggest that metacognition's innate ability to reflect on oneself and exercise mental restraint is essential for promoting personal development and a feeling of meaning in life.

Autonomy:

Environmental Mastery: $r = 0.471$, $p < 0.01$
Personal Growth: $r = 0.513$, $p < 0.01$

The study finds a significant positive correlation between autonomy and personal development and environmental mastery. It may be indicated from this that people who feel more in control of their lives and have a better level of skill in controlling their surroundings are also more likely to pursue personal growth and self-actualization. People with better autonomy are able to make their own decisions, experience a greater sense of agency and self-control over their life, and navigate and control their surroundings more skilfully.

Environmental Mastery:

Personal Growth: $r = 0.413$, $p < 0.01$
The positive correlation implies that people who feel capable of controlling their environment also tend to improve personal growth. The capacity to adjust to and successfully manage one's surroundings, or environmental mastery, may support overall psychological well-being.

Personal Growth:

Positive Relations: $r = 0.548$, $p < 0.01$
Purpose in Life: $r = 0.541$, $p < 0.01$
These significant positive connections suggest that having a feeling of purpose in life and having positive relationships are significantly tied to personal growth. People who engage in personal development are more likely to lead satisfying lives with a distinct sense of purpose and direction in their relationships.

Positive Relations:
Purpose in Life: $r = 0.359$, $p < 0.01$
Positive relationships and a sense of purpose in life are positively correlated, which shows that a strong sense of purpose and a strong social attachment are commonly connected. This suggests that happy and contented relationships contribute to an individual's longevity and improved health. Negative relationships have the potential to cause anxiety and depression, which can inevitably impact one's purpose in life.

This positive correlation implies a relationship between having a feeling of purpose in life and positive relations. A stronger sense of purpose and contentment in life could be influenced by strong social ties.

Purpose in Life:
Metacognition: $r = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$
This positive link suggests that those who have a stronger feeling of purpose in life might also use their minds more metacognitively. A feeling of purpose may encourage people to consider their words and deeds, which can result in increased self-awareness and self-control.

Self-Acceptance:
Metacognition: $r = 0.497$, $p < 0.01$
The significant positive Correlation indicates a close relationship between metacognition and self-acceptance. Self-awareness and introspective thinking are associated with higher degrees of self-acceptance in individuals. Understanding one's thought processes and engaging in introspection can help one accept themselves, flaws and all.

Complex links between numerous psychological constructs are revealed by the correlation analysis. These results advance our knowledge of the interactions and influences between several facets of human experience and cognition. They emphasize how crucial elements like social interactions, autonomy, personal development, and self-awareness are for fostering psychological health and general well-being.

DISCUSSION

Relationship between Social Networking and Psychological Well-being: Higher levels of social media use are linked to lower levels of positive connections and personal development, as seen by the negative correlation between social networking involvement and positive relations ($r = -0.285$, $p < 0.01$) and personal growth ($r = -0.349$, $p < 0.01$).
These results align with earlier studies showing that excessive usage of social media might result in low self-esteem, feelings of social isolation, and poor life satisfaction. Positive interpersonal interactions may be declining as a result of the persistent validation-seeking and comparison-seeking behaviours that are common on social media platforms, which can also obstruct chances for personal growth.

Relationship between Metacognition and Psychological Well-being: Individuals who engage in metacognitive processes are likely to experience higher levels of personal growth and a stronger sense of purpose in life, as indicated by the positive correlations between metacognition and both personal growth ($r = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$) and purpose in life ($r = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$).
Through introspection on one's ideas, emotions, and actions, metacognition helps people become more self-aware and capable of self-control. This improved self-awareness could lead to a more profound sense of purpose and direction in life, which would promote psychological health.

Impact of Autonomy and Environmental Mastery on Psychological Well-being: Autonomy and environmental mastery have strong positive correlations ($r = 0.471$, $p < 0.01$) and personal growth have strong positive correlations ($r = 0.513$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that people who feel independent and in control of their lives also tend to have higher levels of personal growth and greater mastery over their environment. People who have autonomy are better equipped to make decisions that are consistent with their values and aspirations, which boosts their sense of competence and self-efficacy.

Gender Differences in Psychological Well-being: In terms of metacognition and social networking participation, male individuals outperformed female ones by a small margin. On favourable relations, however, those who were female scored marginally higher.
These gender disparities might be a reflection of social norms and expectations around the usage of social media and personal connections. For instance, women may place a higher value on preserving intimate relationships and social support systems, whereas men may use social media more frequently for networking and information exchange.
The results emphasize how crucial it is to take gender into account when designing treatments to support college students' psychological well-being.

The results of this study shed important light on the intricate connections between college students' use of social networking sites, metacognition, and psychological wellbeing. The possible detrimental consequences of excessive social media use on interpersonal connections and personal development are highlighted by the negative correlations between social networking activity and positive relationships as well as personal growth. These results are in line with earlier studies that suggested excessive social media use could result in depressive and lonely feelings.

Conversely, the favourable associations found between metacognition and aspects of psychological well-being highlight the significance of reflective thought and self-awareness in fostering personal development, a sense of purpose in life, and self-acceptance in university students. These results imply that improving metacognitive skills through treatments may benefit students' wellbeing in transitional times.

The impact of demographic variables on college students' use of social networking sites and metacognitive techniques highlights the necessity for tailored interventions that take into account their unique characteristics. For instance, gender variations in social media usage patterns may need to be taken into account in interventions aimed at treating social networking addiction. All things considered, the study's findings advance our knowledge of the intricate relationships that exist between college students' psychological health, metacognition, and social networking. Subsequent studies may examine these connections in more detail and examine the efficacy of programs designed to encourage favourable outcomes during college transitions.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the complex relationships that exist between college students' use of social networks, their use of metacognitive techniques, and their psychological well-being during times of transition. The results showed that while engaging in metacognitive activities was positively correlated with psychological well-being indicators like personal growth and purpose in life, excessive social media use was negatively associated with various aspects of psychological well-being, including positive relationships and personal growth. Furthermore, it was found that environmental mastery and autonomy were important predictors of psychological well-being, highlighting the significance of feeling in control of one's environment and life. These findings emphasize the need for customized interventions that support college students' responsible use of social media and improve their metacognitive abilities in order to promote their overall wellbeing during times of transition. All things considered, the study offers insightful information about the intricate relationships among social networking, metacognition, and psychological health, highlighting the significance of all-encompassing strategies to assist students' mental health and ability to adapt to change.

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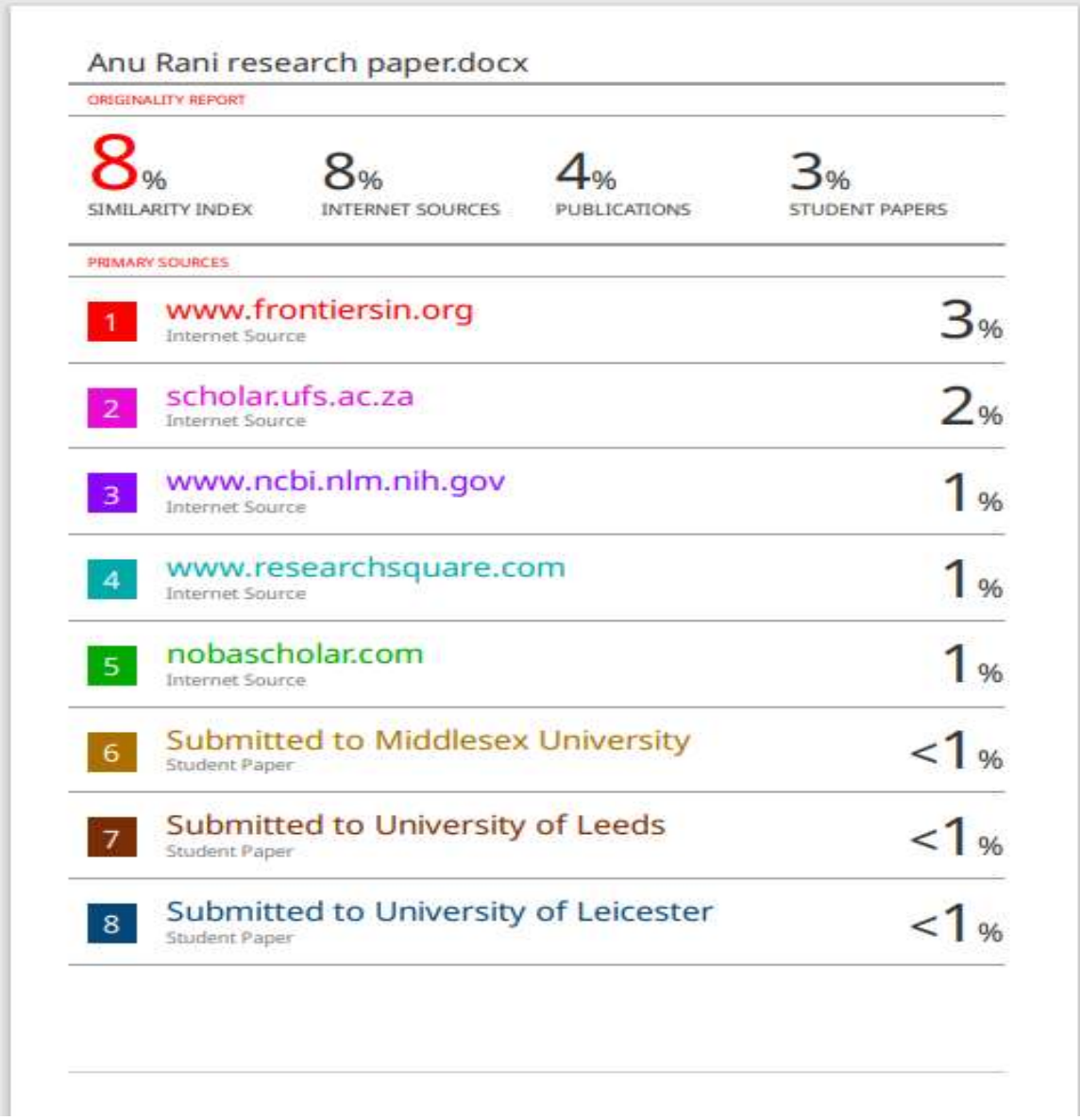

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