Perceived Parental Affection, Supervision and Social Media Addiction of Chittagong University Students

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Abstract

Parenting behaviors like parental affection and supervision greatly determine different developmental outcomes of a person. Inadequate parenting behavior can lead to different behavioral problems, even various forms of addictions such as social media addiction in young adults like university students. The present study attempted to investigate the relation of social media addiction with parental affection and supervision of university students according to their gender and family type. The sample of the study was purposively selected 300 students from Chittagong University. The family relation scale and the Bangla version of Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale were used as data collection tools. The collected data were analyzed by using independent sample t-test, Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis. Male participants perceived significantly more affection and supervision than female participants. Participants from nuclear family had significantly more social media addiction than extended family. Social media addiction was found significantly negatively correlated with both parental affection and supervision. Parental affection significantly predicted social media addiction. The findings of the study may contribute to reduce social media addiction of our university students by highlighting the need for proper parental affection and supervision.

Keywords: Perceived parental affection, supervision, social media addiction

Introduction

The significance of parenting practice and parental attachment between the child and the parent has long been established. The early attachment patterns with parents tend to be stable over time and predictive of an adult's interpersonal relationships with others.[1] If the attachment in childhood is not established in a desirable way, the child attached anxiously with their parents. An anxiously attached child will continue to have the same attachment style throughout life. The affectionless control (low care and high protection) is the most dysfunctional and harmful parenting style, which is likely to bring about interpersonal incompetencies in adult life.[2] Studies have shown that interpersonal incompetencies predispose young adults to an increased risk of behavioral problems and addiction.[3] In this context, although there have been researches on the relationship of various variables with SMA, researchers had paid little attention on the relation between parenting behavior and SMA of young adults like university students. Addressing the scarcity of research in this area, the present study tried to investigate the influence of two important parental behavior, perceived parental affection and supervision on SMA of university students according to their gender and family type.

Parental affection is referred to as responsiveness or support. It is related to positive affiliation, communication regard or unconditional love expressed by the parent toward the child. And parental supervision involves setting rules, giving direction, counseling, advising, making a clear distinction between right and wrong and providing protection in daily activities for

wellbeing of child.[4] When parenting practices do not include clear expectations, or fail to provide proper affection, supervision, children are at risk for developing behavioural problems.[5] The quality of attachment with parents from childhood to young adulthood determine different outcomes in life, such as the level of social skill, self-esteem, emotional maturity.[6]

Many concerns for young adults like university students as having lack of discipline in their family, family violence, and/or ineffective parenting style.[11,29,31] Lower levels of parental affection and supervision perceived by young adults have been found associated with maladaptive and dysfunctional risky behavior such as, substance use, SMA.[7] When students perceived adverse parental relationships, they try to "escape" it by focusing on others like online communication with others and gradually engage in social media addiction.[8] In this regard, social media addiction serves as a coping strategy for them to deal with their situation. Thus adverse parenting style affects social media addiction of the students. Moderate use of social media is an enabler of healthy relationships. Browsing through social media and interacting with friends help people to reduce their feelings of loneliness and increase happiness. But when it becomes excessive and addictive it becomes a deterrent to positive mental health. The number of internet subscribers as well as social media users in Bangladesh are increasing day by day. According to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) the total number of internet subscribers in our country has reached 131.37 million at the end of December, 2023 and among them 80 percent internet users are on social networking website i.e. Facebook, Messenger, Imo, WhatsApp. [10]

Now a days adolescents and young adults (e.g., college/university students) have been shown to be at high risk of SMA.[9] Griffiths[11] explain some reasons why university students are vulnerable to SMA than others. First, university students have notably high internet literacy which enables them to be the predominant users of social networking sites. Second, compared with school or college students, university students' online activities are less supervised by their teachers and parents. Third, university students typically have flexible schedules and more free and unlimited access to social networking sites. Fourth, developmental characteristics associated with youth may also increase the attraction of social networking sites for university students. Social networking sites use offers young adults new and convenient opportunities to interact with different people, build up intimate relationships, and further develop their identities.[11] Students are fond of social media because it gives a feel of freedom to do whatever they want to upload what they want, can make new friends and talk to whom they want. The use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Messenger, Imo, WhatsApp and Viber offer them a portal for entertainment and communication which permits them to keep in touch with others.[12] Mobile devices have given them an easy access in internet regardless anywhere/anytime.

Children learn various types of behavior from their socializing agents (family members) within their family. Their personality, attitude, thinking is developed and shaped by their family members. Each family member plays specific roles in this learning process. In case of nuclear families, children are reared by only their parents and their parenting behaviors are not get the chance to influenced by other family members like joint families. In case of joint families, children get the chance to learn from other family members like their grandparents or others and the parenting behavior of their parents are may influenced by other family members. Moreover, children reared within nuclear family may have more chance to affected by social media addiction as they cannot get more family members to compensate their social communication need. So, it is worthwhile to investigate family type as a demographic factor to better understand the parenting behavior and social media addiction of students.

Researchers have found mixed findings for parental affection and supervision related to gender. Nilsson[13] investigated about the relationship between family influences and adolescent offending among males and females and found that males perceived better parental affection than females but females perceived better parental supervision than males. Walayat and Butt[14] studied about parental acceptance-rejection, childhood trauma, emotion regulation, and psychological adjustment of adolescents of Pakistan. They found that, male respondents perceived higher level of parental affection as compared to female respondents. Similarly males were found more attached to the parental environment, whereas females showed greater autonomy.[15] Male perceived more parental acceptance/affection than female in a study of parental acceptance-rejection and emotional intelligence.[16] Priyanka and Devi[17] investigated about gender differences in the parenting styles and found males perceived higher levels of authoritarian parenting style in their families. But Jeny and Varghese[18] did not find any significant gender difference in parental affection and supervision. Similarly, Shehata and Zaki[19] researched about parental affection of male and female and found parental affection did not vary according to gender.

Akhtar et al.[20] showed joint family moderated the relationship between parenting styles of parents and social competence of children in their study related to the moderating effect of joint family on the relationship between parenting styles of parents and social competence of children. Shabbir and Ishaq[21] studied about the impact of perceived parenting style and emotional intelligence on communication competence among adolescents. They found no significant differences on perceived parenting style on the basis of nuclear and joint family systems. Islam, Rahman and Rahman[16] found that, participants from single family perceived more parental acceptance/affection than the participants from joint family from their study related to parental acceptance-rejection and emotional intelligence.

Among the students of Malayasian Universities, Sandvig[22] showed that the increased use of social media was found predominantly among the females. Choudhury and Ali[23] also found female university students to be more addicted to social media compared to male from their comparative study on social media addiction of university students. Similarly, Monacis et al.[24] in Italy found female had more SMA than male. In a comparative study on SMA of high school and university students Simsek et al.[25] found female students are more addicted to social media than male students. On the other hand, some researchers have found males were more addicted. In a study conducted by Kannan et al.[26] about gender variation in SMA, the prevalence of addiction was found to be 22.8 percent in male whereas as only 8.1 percent in female. Similarly SMA was found more among the males compared to female students.[27] On the other hand, in a study of gratifications of social media usage Raacke and Bonds-Raacke[28] claimed that there was no gender variation in the use of social media.

Islam et al.[29] examined the problematic smartphone and social media use among Bangladeshi college and university students and found that university students from nuclear family had significantly more SMA than joint family. But Ferreira et al.[30] found family type has no significant effect on SMA.

Chang et al.[31] researched about the effect of parent–child relationship on SMA and found that strong attachment to parents is negatively correlated with SMA. Another research conducted by Moazedian et al.[32] found that parenting style is a predictor of problematic internet use. In line with this, Gunuc and Dogan[33] found that low parental affection increases likelihood of SMA. Moreover, a study related to family relationships and problematic internet use among Spanish students by López et al.[8] concluded that parent–child relationships based on trust and affection are powerful protective factors against SMA.

Gunuc and Dogan[33] studied the relationships between Turkish adolescents' internet addiction, their perceived social support and family activities. They found that, participants who perceived low parental support/supervision had more SMA. Subsequently, Lin et al.[34] investigated about parental supervision and internet addiction and found that, participative and supportive parental supervision can substantially decrease the probability of becoming addicted to the social media. Another research showed that social media addicted people consistently rated parental rearing behaviors as being over-intrusive, punitive, and lacking in proper supervision.[4] Moreover, In a Chinese study related to parental behavioral and psychological control and problematic internet use Li et al.[35] found that parental supervision reduce the risk of SMA. Similarly, Martins et al.[36] investigated the role of parental control on SMA and found that low parental supervision was related to SMA.

Steers et al.[37] conducted a research on usage of social networking sites and depressive symptoms. They found that extreme involvement in social networking sites use has been connected to different damages in psychosocial activities with loosing tolerances, showing gloomy symptoms, creating problems with interactions, compact physical movement, and decreasing academic success among students. Jha et al.[38] studied about facebook use and its effects on students in a private medical college of Nepal and found that SMA greatly hampers students' academic performance as well as health condition. Shabir et al.[39] investigated the impact of social media on youth and found that social media promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among youth.

Though university students attempt to separate their lives from the control of their parents to develop independence and take responsibility of their own world, nonetheless, studies suggest that parents continue to exert direct and indirect effects on their lives, whether in the psychological or social domain.[1] Parental rejection and paternal overprotection have been found to be positively associated with university students' risks of addictive behavior.[40] If parents could not supply proper parenting behavior, young adults suffer from loneliness, low self-esteem, anxiety, etc and they might try to compensate it by using another ways like: quartering to friends and peers and extending communications with social media, which in turn may lead to the SMA.[41] Researchers have found that SMA is significantly correlated with different adverse psychological traits such as low self-esteem, shyness[42], poorly adapted person: introvert, neuroticism[43], sadness, anxiety, loneliness.[4] University students are more vulnerable to SMA than children or adolescents due to having personal mobile device, high internet literacy and experience, getting more independence than children or adolescents.[11] Based upon these previous studies it can be assumed that, lack of adequate parenting factors like proper parental affection and supervision may lead to the SMA in young adults like university students of our society. Although there have been many researches about the influence of parenting behavior on children and adolescents' SMA, there is scarcity of research in this issue with university students at both home and abroad. Addressing the gap of knowledge in this area, the aim of the present study was to investigate the influence of perceived parental affection and supervision on SMA of our university students. This is the novelty of this study. Various demographic factors of students can explain their parental affection, supervision and SMA. Among them, previous studies showed that gender and family type are important variables which are closely related to parental affection, supervision and SMA and these two demographic variables explain better the study variables.[13-30] So, the present study investigated parental affection, supervision and SMA of university students according to their gender and family type.

Considering the above facts, the present study was designed (a) to investigate whether perceived parental affection, supervision and SMA vary according to gender; (b) to investigate whether perceived parental affection, supervision

and SMA vary according to family type; (c) to explore whether there is any relation of SMA with parental affection and supervision and (d) to investigate whether SMA can be predicted by parental affection and supervision. The findings of the present study may help parents and proper authorities to conscious and promote about healthy parenting practices so that; our students can reduce their SMA and improve their lives by properly using their valuable time.

Materials and Methods

Sample

The number of population was collected from the website of the university of Chittagong. The total number of population was 27000. The Raosoft sample size calculator was used to measure the sample size of the study. Considering some factors: a) total target population; b) 5% of marginal error acceptance; c) 95% of the confidence interval; d) 80% response distribution, recommended sample size was 244 for the present study. 300 sample were considered for the advantage of sampling design. Samples were taken purposively because they were selected according to some characteristics or inclusion criteria. Students who were reared by their biological parents, who's both parents are alive and who live with their parents at home those were selected as sample. Among 300 sample, 150 (50%) were male and 150 (50%) were female. 141 (47%) were from nuclear family and remaining 159 (53%) were from joint family. They were from different academic sessions and different departments. Age of the respondents ranged from 19-28 years (mean = 22.26 years, SD = 1.84 years).

Measuring Instruments

The following instruments were used in the present study:

Demographic and Personal Information Questionnaire

A demographic and personal information questionnaire was used to collect data about participant's age, gender, family type, academic year etc.

Family Relation (FR) Scale

The family relation scale has been developed in Bangladesh perspective. The scale was constructed and standardized by Pervin.[44] 52 items were included in this scale. There are four subscales of the scale: affection, supervision, parental relationship and mental illness. In the present research, two subscales named affection and supervision were used as these subscales are consistent with the objectives of the present research. Split half reliability of affection is .74 and supervision is .85.[44] The construct validity coefficient of the FR scale was found .61 with Bell's Home Adjustment Inventory.[44] Both the affection and the supervision subscale have 13 items. There are 9 positive and 4 negative items for affection subscale and 8 positive and 5 negative items for the supervision subscale. There were 5 response alternatives of 'Never', 'Rarely' 'Often', 'Almost always' and 'Always'. For positive items, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 were given according to the above response alternatives and for negative items 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 were given according to the above response alternatives. The sum total of all items of each of the subscale is the total score of an individual in the specific subscale. The range of the subscale scores was 0 to 52 for each. Higher score in affection subscale indicates more perceived parental affection and higher score in supervision subscale indicates more perceived parental supervision.

Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale

The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS)[46] was adapted from the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS).[47] The BSMAS comprises six items and had a high Cronbach's alpha (0.88) in the original validation. The Bangla BSMAS was adapted by Ahmed et al.[48] from the Bangla BFAS.[49] The adaptation was made by replacing the word 'Facebook' with the words 'social media' only, and social media being defined as "Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the like" in the instructions to participants. Internal consistency

of the Bangla BSMAS was found good (Cronbach's alpha = .76). Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the scale had acceptable model fit ($\chi 2$ = 21.15, df = 9, *p* = .012, CFI [Comparative Fit Index] = 0.97, TLI [Tucker-Lewis Index] = 0.95, RMSEA [Root Mean Square Error of Approximation] = 0.06, SRMR [Standardized root mean square residual] = 0.03). These indicate that The BSMAS is a psychometrically sound measure that could be used in clinical settings also. Each question is answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very rarely*) to 5 (*very often*) yielding a composite score from 6 to 30, concerning experiences during the past year. Higher scores indicated higher level of SMA.

Design

Cross-sectional survey research design was followed for conducting the present study.

Procedure

Before administration of the questionnaires, necessary rapport was established with respondents. They were told that the sole purpose of the investigation was academic. Then the demographic and personal information questionnaire, *family relation scale and* Bergen social media addiction scale were administered to respondents and requested a silent reading at the instruction provided with the scales before starting to answer. They also requested to read each statement attentively and express their feelings by putting tick mark ($\sqrt{}$) on the appropriate response box. All possible clarifications were made to the problems if faced by the respondents. There was no time limit for the respondents to answer all the items of the scale. After completing of their tasks, the answered questionnaires were collected from them. Finally, they were given thanks for their sincere co-operation.

Results and Discussion

The collected data of the present study were analyzed by using independent sample t-test, Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis. All statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical program SPSS version 25.0 for window.

Results from Table 1 show that, parental affection (t= 3.733, df= 298, p<.01) and supervision (t= 2.872, df= 298, p<.01) differ significantly according to gender. Findings also suggest that, no significant gender difference was found according to SMA. Male participants perceived significantly more affection (M= 42.32, SD= 6.61) than female participants (M= 38.98, SD= 8.74). Male participants perceived significantly more supervision (M= 40.12, SD= 7.57) than female participants (M= 37.35, SD= 9.04).

Table 2 shows that, SMA (t= 3.349, df= 298, p<.01) differ significantly according to family type. Findings also suggest that; parental affection and supervision did not vary according to family type. Participants from nuclear family (M= 20.02, SD= 5.15) had significantly more SMA than participants from extended family (M= 17.91, SD= 5.69).

Results in the Table 3 indicate that, SMA was significantly negatively correlated with both parental

Table 1: Mean and *SD* of Parental Affection, Parental Supervision and SMA of Male and Female Participants with "t" Value

Variable	Group	*N*	Mean	Std. deviation	*df*	*t*
Parental affection	Male	150	42.32	6.610	298	3.733*
	Female	150	38.98	8.740		
Parental supervision	Male	150	40.12	7.572	298	2.872*
	Female	150	37.35	9.049		
SMA	Male	150	18.86	4.795	298	-.135
	Female	150	18.95	6.208		

*p<.01

Table 2: Mean, *SD* and "*t*" Value of Parental Affection, Parental Supervision and SMA According to Family Type

Variable	Group	*N*	Mean	Std. deviation	*df*	*t*
Parental affection	Nuclear	141	39.85	8.374	298	-1.651
	Extended	159	41.36	7.439		
Parental supervision	Nuclear	141	37.96	8.206	298	-1.508
	Extended	159	39.43	8.615		
SMA	Nuclear	141	20.02	5.153	298	3.349*
	Extended	159	17.91	5.692		

*$p<.01$

Table 3: Correlation of SMA with Parental Affection and Supervision

Variable	SMA	Significance level
Parental affection	-.48*	.01
Parental Supervision	-.35*	.01

*$p<.01$

affection ($r= -.48$, $p<.01$) and supervision ($r= -.35$, $p<.01$). Results from Table 4 show that, only parental affection ($\beta= -.430$, *t-value* $= -6.580$) was found as the strong predictor of SMA. The value of standardized coefficients (β) of parental affection indicates that, one-unit increase in parental affection decreases 0.430 unit in SMA. Results from Table 4 also indicate that, parental affection, explained 23.6% of variance of SMA Result from Table 1 shows that, parental affection and supervision differ significantly according to gender. Male participants perceived significantly more affection and supervision than female participants. This finding is in line with previous research findings of Nilsson[13] and Walayat and Butt.[14] It can be explained by gender inequalities and stereotypes of social learning theory of Bandura.[49] Parents act with their children in such a way that it is able to meet our social desires. Our traditional society still believes that sons and daughters should be reared differently. Parents tend to prefer boys over girls, which is manifested in reproductive behavior, marital life, and parents' pastimes and investments in their children. Sometimes girls suffer with inferiority for this social perspective and boys feel more attached with parents. Our society follows traditional gender roles, in which the male is thought as the breadwinner and the female is thought as in charge of childcare and housekeeping. This defines masculinity as being independent, assertive, and aggressive and femininity as being nurturing, sensitive and emotional.[50] Parents may assume that sons, will have (or need to have) higher economic achievement in adulthood and this may foster certain types of investment (e.g., saving for college). Parents' expectations about later life exchanges with children (e.g., expectations of financial help from sons but caregiving help from daughters) might also lead them to encourage different behaviors in sons and daughter.[51] Thus males appear to get preferential treatment from their parents such as, they receive more helpful praise, more time is invested in them, as well as more affection and supervision are also given to them.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis of SMA on Parental Affection and Supervision

Independent variables	*β*	*t*	*R^2*
Parental affection	-.430*	-6.580	.236
Parental supervision	-.082	-1.262	

*$F(2,197) = 31.09$, *$p<.001$

Results from Table 2 indicate that, SMA differs significantly according to family type. Participants from nuclear family had significantly more SMA than participants from extended family. The finding is supported by the previous finding of Islam et al.[29] Family is a place where individuals feel comfort, security and help when needed. Generally, parents remain busy to their works. Young adults like university students cannot get proper quality time from their parents. In nuclear family, as there is no other member like grandparents or others, they cannot share their daily activities and various types of emotions properly. They feel lonely and emotional insecure. In order to ride from the loneliness, they try to engage with their friends with social media. Individuals who are anxious about being alone, have a strong need for reassurance and spend more time on social media.[52] The more time they spend on social media, the more feedback and responses they receive from others. But in joint family people receive more social support and feel lower level of loneliness.[53]

SMA was found significantly negatively correlated with both parental affection and supervision. Table 4 shows that, only parental affection was found as the strong predictor of SMA. These findings suggest that, if parental affection increase, SMA will be decrease, which is also in line with previous research findings.[31] Proper parental affection give a secure relationship with parents and people can feel worthy of love. It enables them to feel safe in sharing feelings with their parents and others.[54] Therefore, these individuals act using more functional coping strategies and are more protected against addiction to social media.[24] Thus a stronger parental attachment is related to less motivation to use the social media to escape from everyday problems. But young adults like university students who perceived low affection and supervision from their parents use social media to fulfill the need for care and affection, replace and compensate for missing affection from family members.[55] The more they think they cannot rely on others' support the more

it leads them to the avoidance of interpersonal relationships and they search for compensation via online engagement and use the social media as a type of a safe environment where they can find what they perceive as missing in their day-to-day lives, such as emotional support.[56]

Social media addiction among students has become a global problem and public awareness issue. The present study contributes to existing literature by investigating the parental behavior as an influential factor for controlling social media addiction of university students. Findings from the present research suggest that, positive relationships and interaction with parents can play an important role to promote healthy behavior among young adults including the appropriate use of internet in preventing SMA. A high-quality relationship with parents may create a safe family environment for young adults like university students to communicate and disclose their negative feelings and distress, lessening the likelihood of turning to social media as an escape from loneliness.

Limitations

Due to the nature of the research design it is not possible to draw causal conclusions. Parenting behavior and social media addiction might be affected by another factors as well, which might be in fact responsible for their association. In addition, social media addiction may evoke low parental affection and high supervision; consequently, further investigation is necessary to understand the complex interaction of these variables. No information was taken from parents, which could be helpful for better understanding the research variables.

Challenges

All the questionnaires were self-administered and the distortion of consciousness was hard to control.

Suggestions

Future research should be carried out longitudinally and could examine the alternative causal model. Studies with a longitudinal design are needed to investigate the direction of effects as well as changes in parenting

practices over time. More sophisticated analysis could be used to figure out the causal relationships. Further research should be carried out to understand how parenting behavior can reduce social media addiction of students.

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