Social Media Addiction in Adolescents and Parental Challenges

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The period of adolescence has been described as ranging from 10-19 years by World Health Organization (2022). It is the time when there is a transition in relying on friends from the parents. Social media use has become very common now a days. It has influenced human beings regardless of their age remarkably. Social media facilitates communication, enhances knowledge, and helps in entertaining the adolescents. Unluckily, the use of social media has now become overuse as adolescents are overindulged in accessing social media. This over indulgence is creating negative consequences that disrupts their academic, personal, familial and social life. Their relations are becoming superfluous with family especially with their parents (Ali, 2016).

Social media addiction among adolescents is very troublesome for parents as it causes many psychological effects on their children. Sharing personal information in the social media is very common among adolescents that was once kept secret to maintain family ties. Similarly, certain personality traits have been found to be positively correlated with the development of social media addiction. Personality characteristics such as neuroticism, agreeableness and extraversion are associated with higher social media addiction (Che Amat & Xuan, 2020).

Adolescents develop many pathologies as a consequence of social media addiction such as depression, and anxiety. A review found higher disposition of developing depressive symptoms among adolescents. Sleep disturbances also developed as a result of social media addiction. The adolescents with psychopathic tendencies also use internet to express their personality trends (Che Amat & Xuan, 2020).

On the other hand, cyber bullying from the social media is also very common. Batool et al. (2017) revealed that both boys and girls become victims of the cyber bullying. Furthermore, the adolescents affected by cyber bullying experience bad performance in academics, disturbance in emotionality and developing distant relationship. Girls experience more cyber bullying as compared to the boys.

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to development of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) closely associated with the social media addiction. The quality of parental relationship, parenting styles and the structure of family all influences both the media use and thus the creation of fear of missing out (Bloemen, & Coninck, 2020).

Many pathologies in the families also cause social media addiction. Yu et al. (2016) found that social media addiction was positively correlated with family integration and was high in families who were divorced, having low-income, or having conflict. Low socioeconomic status was also found to be positively associated with social media addiction. Similarly, parental neglect, and conduct problem were also found to be associated with social media addiction.

In the past, the families were very concerned in maintaining the familial

relationship globally. The situation has changed now (Ali, 2016). Those who spend most of their time with their families are now spending most of their time on surfing the internet. It has restricted adolescents to their own rooms, avoiding a family get together and make them lonely. It is weakening their ties with their families and developing gaps between them as most of the adolescent participants in a study showed minimum concern regarding matters of their family (Ali, 2016).

Additionally, it was observed that satisfaction with family life predicted social media addiction negatively and significantly. It was also found that satisfaction with family life mediated the relationship between social ignorance and social media addiction. There is a close relationship between life satisfaction and social media addiction. Researches have revealed that the adolescents with low satisfaction of life are highly addicted of social media (Che Amat & Xuan,2020).

Parenting style is very important in contributing to the development of social media addiction in adolescents (van den Eijnden, 2010). There is a significant contribution of adolescents' perception of paternal parenting styles and social media addiction such as permissive and authoritarian in the adolescents' addiction of social media (Setiawati et al., 2021). In this context, high demanding behavior with low responsiveness is more common among authoritarian parents. Their over strictness can restrict the adolescents to engage in social media activity as an escape from their parents. Similarly, low supervision leads towards over involvement in social media addiction among adolescents (Setiawati et al., 2021). Authoritative parenting style and self-efficacy has low relationship with social media addiction whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting style has higher relationship with social media addiction (Bilgin et al., 2020).

The effect of social media on family connectedness was systematically reviewed too. Generally mixed findings revealed certain aspects of social media use as enhancing family connectedness, whereas other could have negative influence on constructive family interactions (Tariq et al., 2021). The research reveals most of the participants with their high usage of social media has influenced negatively with their relationship with family. They started to getting away from their relatives, their friends and even from their own self resulting in developing introversion. It is reducing bonding with family and altering the value system (Ali, 2016).

Parents, psychologist, teachers, siblings, and peers all are having crucial role in the treatment of social media addiction. Parents especially fathers should avoid permissiveness and authoritarian parenting styles. It will in turn enhance the mental health and help reducing the social media addiction (Setiawati et al., 2021).

Parents should focus on the adolescents' basic needs, enhancing their self-esteem, resolving their social conflicts, bridging communication gaps with their intimate relations and setting realistic goals in their life. Now it is important to make them learn to create a balance between current trends in this global world and their role in the society in context of its norms and values (Ali, 2016).

Contribution of Author
Saima Naqvi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

Conflict of Interest
There is no conflict of interest declared by author.

Source of Funding
The author declared no source of funding.

Data Availability Statement
The data sharing is not applicable to this guest editorial as no dataset was used in the current study.

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