

Impact of Social Networking Sites on Youth: A Critical Study

Ms. Smita Thakur, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla-5

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to examine the impact of social networking sites on the youth and to identify influence of social media networking sites on their daily life. A qualitative approach has been adopted in order fully explore the subject matter without any constraints. For this purpose articles, books, peer reviewed Journals and internet surfing was conducted systematically and critically. The grounded theory technique was used to reach out the conclusion. The trends revealed that most of Indian youth use social media not only for socializing, but for communication, entertainment and many other social and educational activities. In recent times social media is influencing every sphere of life very much. It is the decision of today's young generation whether use it for positive or negative impact.

Keywords: Social Media, Twitter, Communication, Entertainment and Education.

Introduction

In this paper Grounded theory technique is used to critically analyse the impact of social networking sites on youths of India. It is a systematic methodology in social sciences involving the construction of theories through methodical gathering and analysis of data. This research methodology uses inductive reasoning. The significance of Internet in personal & professional lives of youth has increased dramatically during the last decade and today young people use Internet for different purposes including education, shopping, communication, and entertainment etc. Further, social networking sites have emerged as a platform for displaying individual profiles, sharing information, photos, videos, experiences among Internet users as well as forming friendships and sending messages to each-other. It is a web based communication media which permits handlers to have conversations, share information and create contents according to their own needs and requirements. There are numerous social media sites like blogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram), instant messaging (WhatsApp) and photo-sharing sites, video-sharing sites (YouTube) etc. The worldwide people use social networking sites to share information and make connections on a personal level and at mass level. All people use social media to communicate with their friends, family and to learn new things. Due to larger access to the public, business houses also use social media platform to have conversation with their target audience, get feedback from customers, promote, and elevate their brand. Professionals increase their knowledge in their respective fields and build a network of professionals from similar industry. There are lots of social networking sites being introduced every year, deciding which one is right for your business, professional use or personal use. So, we must be aware that which social media platform fit into our requirements. About 400 million people were using Social networking sites in India. Around 346.2 million people were using Facebook. Social networking websites are very popular among youth so they contribute the majority percentage users of these sites. There has been significant interest and concern about the risks of online social networking because of access to personal information and the anonymity that the system allows. The popular social networking sites of India and worldwide are given in Table 1.

Table 1 (Statista; Statista Digital Market Outlook 2020)

Social Media	Worldwide user	Indian user
Facebook	1.69 billion	346.2 million
Twitter	64.2 million	13.65 million
WhatsApp	1.5 billion	200 million
Instagram	120 million	88 million

Facebook: Facebook is currently one of the most famous social networking application site globally, it allows the users to create profiles similar to a 'wall' like a virtual bulletin board, add friends, and send messages, comment, upload and share videos, photographs, web links. This application has several public features like Marketplace' to post and respond to classified advertisements online 'Groups' to publicize events and invite guests and friends for attending that even 'Pages' to create and promote a personal or business ideas or involve others in a topic. Presence Technology' which allows video calls and text chat for those online on the web site o 'Privacy' to block/allow specific or all members from viewing the profile, photos or comments.

LinkedIn: This is a business related social media platform mainly used for professional networking. It is an ideal site to post updates, job postings, academic programs, events and projects.

Twitter: It is a micro blogging site which allows registered members to broadcast and follow replies to short posts, better known as 'Tweets' with no approvals required. Other users can subscribe to follow or reply to the tweets which may include hyperlinks to other blogs or posts and receive update messages by adding 'Hashtags' to keyword on the post, this acts like a met tag, expressed as #keyword. The tweets are searchable and available for the public. Twitter works on Ruby-for Rails which is an open source web framework and its API is available for application developers.

WhatsApp: It is the name of a mobile messaging app for Android, iPhone, Windows Phone or for Mac or Windows PCs. WhatsApp lets users make free voice calls, face-to-face video calls or text message. By using your wired Internet connection or connecting your device to Wi-Fi, users avoid SMS and data usage mobile carrier fees that are typically associated with texting and voice or video messaging.

Instagram: It is a free photo sharing application that allows users to take photos, apply a filter, and share it on the service or a variety of other social networking services, including Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, Tumblr and Flickr.

Concept of Social Networking Sites: Web sites that allow members to construct a public or semipublic profile and formally articulate their relationship to other user in a way that is visible to anyone (Hutchinson (2008)". "The idea behind these sites is that people are invited to join by exiting members who think that they would be valuable additions to their community. The site provides a directory that list member's locations, interests, and qualities (Schneider, 2010). Stutzman (2007) observed that social networking sites can be divided into the main two formats: Social Networking Sites that are organized according to the profile of users and Social Networking Sites that are organized according to the contents of the site."

Characteristics of Social Networking Sites/Services: Drawing on both analyses, theoretical and empirical, we provisionally identify six characteristics of social networking services for investigation:

- **Digital Persona/Virtual Identity:** Social networking software facilitates the development of an on-line persona. A persona is, in this case, an image or representation of the user. The persona is controlled and developed by the user themselves (though the structure for that representation is given by the features of the software). The persona is always a projected image of the user and it may have more or less correspondence with the user's real identity (as they themselves understand it or as understood by other people). Digital identity presupposes a digital public or audience - a profile is first meaningful when experienced by another user.
- **Network Building:** The software offers tools and opportunities for building the social network(s) of the user. It facilitates searching for other users, recruiting tools for

members of the user's off-line network, meeting or being introduced to other users, and grouping of users around themes and interests. Users build interlocking networks of friends, colleagues, and work acquaintances, contacts with shared interests, family and so on. On-line networks can be independent, but they often overlap and interact considerably with users' off-line networks. The service is dependent upon achieving a critical mass - sufficient users to make it feasible to build up a meaningful network.

- **Network Maintenance:** The software provides features for persistence such that the user's network can reach over time, and survive changes to their or other users' persona. The software maintains the coupling between networked users irrespective of other changes in their real or on-line circumstances.
- **Network Interaction:** The software provides ways for users to interact, through direct communication, shared activities, games, or exchange of virtual objects. The virtual environment minimises some difficulties connected with physical interaction, such as geographical or time separation, or mobility.
- **User Generation of Virtual Content:** Not only are users responsible for controlling their own digital personas, but they have the opportunity to provide virtual content and digital objects. These can include text, pictures or video, music clips, three dimensional virtual objects, or programs or applications. This content is important both for the virtual identity of the user, but is also exchanged as a primary component of network interaction.
- **Network Self-Governance:** The network displays observable social norms, social conventions, informal codes of behaviour, and (sometimes) formal rules and regulations. Governance structures are partly enforced by the service providers, partly written into the way the software functions (what is enabled or disallowed), but primarily reproduced by the on-line communication.

Positive Impact of Social Networking Sites: Social sites have following positive impacts:

- **Social connection:** Human beings are described as social animals and society is the main part of Indian culture and every person want to be connected with other like-minded person. Social networking sites provide the medium for youth to connect in a rapid way with the society.
- **Learn to work in group:** Social networking has increased the rate of collaboration among youth. They are able to communicate meeting times in better way and can share information more quickly, which can increase productivity of their work and help them to work well among their peer groups.
- **Helpful in making career:** Social networking teaches young generation skills they'll need to survive in the business world. Being able to create and maintain connections to many people in many industries is an integral part of developing a career or building a business.
- **Increase the skills towards technology:** The youth these days spent much time working with new technologies and develop more familiarity with computers and other electronic devices. With increased focus on technology will aid them throughout their lives.
- **Provide platform to new talent:** There are lots of social networking sites like YouTube, in which users can upload pictures, videos or stories very quickly and easily and it has resulted in a greater amount of sharing of creative works. They can also get instant feedback from friends and family on their creative outlets which helps this young generation to more refine their artistic abilities and can provide much needed confidence or help them decide what career path they may want to pursue.

- Unpredictable rewards: One of the psychological characteristics for habitual social media user is the unpredictability and randomness of what is happening within social media platforms. The psychologists refer these rewards as variable reinforcement schedules and which is the main reasons of repeatedly checking their screens. Social media sites are ‘chock-a-block’ with unpredictable rewards. Habitual social media users never know if their next message or notification will be the one that makes them feel really good. In short, random rewards keep individuals responding for longer.

Negative Impact of Social Networking Sites: Social sites have following negative impacts:

- Social prestige concern: The key feature of social media platform is the like button and it has become the social prestige concern among the young generation. This feature was first introduced by Facebook back in February 2009; some media reports have described the use of ‘like’ buttons as ‘hijacking’ the social reward systems of a user’s brain. Most of the young generation is worried about how many likes they have received.
- Fear of missing out: It has been found in recent research that high engagement in social networking is partially due to fear of missing out among young generation.
- Reduced Learning and Research Capabilities: The young generations have started relying more on the information from these social networking sites and the web. This leads to reduce in their learning and research capabilities. The youth who get involved in the social media sites while studying result in reduction focus of attention as a result of which their academic performance and concentration towards the study decreases.
- Reciprocal liking: Reciprocal liking is tendency for individuals to like others who express a liking for themselves (‘I like you because you like me’). Social relationships online are often facilitated by simple forms of social reciprocity. For instance, when an individual presses the ‘like’ button on a selfie that has been uploaded onto a social networking site, the individual receiving the ‘like’ is more likely to reciprocate if the other individual posts an online selfie. Social media operators can exploit this human condition of reciprocal liking by alerting individuals when another person has read something posted or communicated online. Such alerts encourage the receiving individuals to respond.
- Reduction in Real Human Contact: The more time the young generation spend on these social media sites, the less time they will spend socializing in person with others. This is reducing the communication skills of youth. They are not being able to communicate and socialize effectively face to face with others. This leads to less interaction with the real world and may cause the lack of confidence. Due to lack of confidence the success become more difficult to them in real world.
- Reduces Command over Language Use Age and Creative Writing Skills: In today’s scenario most of the youth uses shortened forms of words on social networking sites. They start relying on the computer grammar and spelling check features.
- Time Wastage: The youth while searching and studying online, get attracted to using social media sites and sometimes they forget why they are using internet. This wastes their time and sometimes they are not able to deliver their work in the specified time frame.
- Negative effect of fake news: In today’s time due more use of social networking sites, there are lots of fake news around the youth that they can’t get what is right and what is wrong. Sometime this fake news affect negatively on the mind of young generation which leads to negative outlook towards the society.

Conclusion

New technology has positive and negative impact on the society at large. Social networking sites have both effects. In today's world we can't deny the use of social networking for younger generation. Social media has great impact on Indian youth and there is lot of challenges which we have to face. There are many questions arise when we think about the impact of social networking sites. These sites provides us knowledge, increase the social connectivity, helpful in doing the business, young people can share their personal experience, provide platform to show their talent, connect us to our dear ones. The networking sites may also leads to some negative effects like fear of missing out, social pressure, lack of confidence, reduce the command over the language, misinformation. It is the responsibility of youth that they should use social media platform for the positive purpose only. They should not post any personal information in these platforms. There should be policy of privacy. Habitual behaviour is a powerful reinforce.

References

Bhardwaj, A., Avasthi, V., Goundar, S. (2017). Impact of Social Networking on Indian Youth - A Survey. *I. J. of Electronics and Information Engineering*, Vol.7 (1), pp.41-51.

Jain, P., Impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on the Youth of India. Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/Impact of Social Networking Sites on The Youth of India_731120240.pdf](file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/Impact%20of%20Social%20Networking%20Sites%20on%20The%20Youth%20of%20India_731120240.pdf)

Livsey, K., (2013). Self-Concept and Online Social Networking in Young Adolescents: Implications for School Counsellors- A report. The University of Texas at Austin

Mark, D., (2019). How do social media operators facilitate habitual use? Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/in-excess/201901/adolescent-social-media-use>

Saileela, S., Kalaivani, S., (2019). Education on Digital Culture and Social Media

Social Networking Statistics (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/outlook/digital-markets>

Social Networking Sites: An Introduction (2012). Retrieved from <https://research-methodology.net/social-networking-sites-an-introduction/>