

# Pattern of social media use among youth: implication for social media literacy

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## Abstract

**Background:** Social media use has increased tremendously over the years and its use has made the communication very easy with others. Social media used for sharing various perspective of life, which also includes sharing their experiences/ facts/ videos and other information.

**Material & methods:** The study explored the Social Media use among 300 youth in the age group of 18-25 years. Background data sheets, Social Media Exploration Sheet were administered in the group setting.

**Results:** It revealed the age of initiation in the age group of 12 to 18 years (37.2% Facebook users for 12 years; 54.0 WhatsApp users for 16 years and 38.3% Instagram users for 18 years. Maximum time spent was 120 minutes and minimum was 25 minutes for Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram. The use of social media was more among the females. 40% also reported that they displayed their identity on social media. Life style disturbance in academics and daily life activities was seen secondary to social media use (99.7%). 62.3 % reported social media helped in communication with others and 75% shared information/videos/images/information through Social Media.

**Conclusions:** It can be used to evolve psycho educational model for bringing intervention for management of social media use.

## Introduction

Recent years has seen a tremendous increase in exposure to social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter among adolescents. The use of social media made the communication very easy with others, promoting user-generated content and interactions among users [1]. Social media used for sharing various perspective of life, which also includes sharing their experiences/ facts/ videos and other information. Social networking, which is one of the main indicators of the technology era, attracts people of all ages, while the virtual world goes beyond the real life via the applications it offers. Especially young adults show an intense interest in social media which is an extension of the Internet technology.

The Global social media research on "Digital in 2019" reported that there is a global increase in social media usage since January 2018 (9%) and the number of social media users worldwide in 2019 is 3.484 billion. YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens, and the Indian teenagers are getting more and more attached to it [2]. According to a new Pew Research Center survey, 95% of teens have access to a smartphone, and 45% say they are online 'almost constantly'. Today, roughly half (51%) of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 use Facebook, notably lower than use of YouTube, Instagram or Snapchat.

The increased use of social networking influenced culture and interpersonal communication among youth. It helped bring friends and family closer for those living in distant locations, low additional cost of connectivity, sharing information, voicing opinions and updating each other on happenings in their lives. Studies also showed that the Social Media facilitate business promotion and interpersonal communication and also it provides platform for individuals to express themselves [3].

On contrary, the majority of the respondents agreed that social media usage interferes with their routine daily activity, academic performance, sleep pattern and mental health issues [4-8]. In relation to the above factors, one of the studies also showed that internet use scores have significant negative correlation between real life bonding capital and self-esteem and positive correlation with online bonding and conflicts in interpersonal relationships [9].

26.7 % of people with social media addiction have reported that they have sleep-related difficulties 2-3 times per week. Those participants with underlying Social Media addiction tend to rate level of severity of their last sleeping issue as high or extremely high as compared to participants who do not have an underlying addiction.

Facebook was commonly used among social media addicts (38.9%) whereas, among social media non-addicts WhatsApp was commonly used (41.2%). Further exploring difference between Government and private college students, they concluded that Internet Gaming (31%), and Facebook (57.3%) was commonly used by social media addicts in Government and Private colleges, respectively. The prevalence of social media addiction was 36.9% among users, distributed equally

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among private and Government PUs. The most common health problem identified was strain on eyes (38.4%), anger (25.5%), and sleep disturbance (26.1%). Social media addiction was found in over one-third of subjects and majority had mild addiction [10].

Mailing and surfing internet are two common reasons for using Internet from times of Web 2.0 (Web technologies in 90s). In Indian youth, social networking websites are growing to gain momentum in its popularity. Almost 30% of the respondents were members of Orkut and 50% in facebook. While other sites mentioned were Tagged, Netlog, MySpace, WAYN, Hi5, BigAdda, LinkedIn, Stylefm, Twitter, Ning, Indyarocks, Friendster, and ebuddy [11].

Addiction was seen in 70.7% and was more common in the age group of 17 years and above. Among the 388 users, the most common sites visited were WhatsApp [used by 277 (82%) of the sample], followed by Facebook used by 254 (75.1%) and Instagram used by 114 users representing 33.7% of the study sample. Smartphones were the most common means of accessing the SNS, followed by desktop/laptop computers at home. The SNS users opined that their online accounts carry real information about them. Social Networking affected their academic performance by interfering with the ability to study or complete assignments in the last one month; late in handing an assignment. In the current study, the association of addiction to SNS with the gender of the subject is not so significant with males (71.6%) higher in number compared to females (69.7%) [12].

The pattern of social networking usage and impact in order to determine the social networking addiction. The author also reviewed benefits of the social networking sites in culture development, building self-identity, developing relationships and acquisition of social, communication, and technical skills. Negative aspects identified were lack of privacy, users vulnerable to crime, constant browsing, social detriments like poor social skills, emotional trauma, addictive behavior, depression anxiety and loneliness, and misinformation [13].

45.5% of the respondents have been using the social media sites for more than 1 year, 34.5% of the respondents have been using the social media sites for 6-12 months and 20% of the respondents have been using the social media sites for less than 6 months. Study further highlighted that the respondents falling under 15-25 years are using social media more when compared to other age category. 52.5% of the respondents have opined that they are addicted towards social media sites and 47.5% of the respondents have opined that they are not addicted towards social media sites. 'Whats App' was ranked as the first social media site and 'Facebook' was ranked as second [14].

Heavy users of social networking sites, with 80% using at least one site or more (with Facebook being the most popular site) and more than 50% logging on to their site at least once a day. Males were significantly more likely than females to place self-promoting pictures or comments (involving sex or alcohol) on their profile, whereas females were significantly more likely than males to post romantic or "cute" pictures and/or information [15].

48% of students (N = 416) met the criteria for addiction and significant differences was observed for gender (in favor of male), education (bachelor course), monthly income (low income), social status (unmarried), hours of daily use (4hrs or more) in the degree of addiction [16].

23 subjects have been found to be internet addicts i.e. have scores 80-100. Among 23 (9.5%) internet addicts found in the study 15 (6.1%) were males and 8 (3.3%) were females [17].

The significant differences was observed for gender, computer ownership (preferring desktop and laptop than mobile) and purpose of internet use (social networking and gaming rather than educational) as well as psychiatric symptoms such as depression between the two groups [18].

Addictive use was present among 1.3% (2% males & 0.6% females) for internet; 4.1 % (5% males & 3.1% females) for mobile phones; 3.5% for social networking sites. Statistically significant differences were observed in relation to family status for internet and face book addictions. It was more among singles, unmarried and lesser in joint families. The number of years of marriage has negative correlation with shopping, sex, mobile, internet and facebook addiction. Physical (eye strain)/Psychological distress (decrease sleep, irritability and restlessness) was present as a morbidity- 6.8% with mobile phone addiction; 4.2 % with internet use and 3% with social networking sites, 3.3% wanted to change their internet activities and 4.2% wanted cut down expenses on mobile phone [19].

Review of literature shows that how in recent years the Social Media use has increased a lot among the young adults. There is a need to assess the pattern of use social media among youths and sensitize user for healthy use of technology. These finding will have implication for research, for promotion of awareness among users as well as use of social media as a modality to promote healthy behaviors.

## Material & methods:

### Aim: To explore the pattern of social media among youth

**Study design:** 300 subjects in the age group of 18-25 years, having minimum one year use of social media, were selected using survey methodology from academic Institution based in Karnataka. Subjects having medical condition which interfere in taking assessments were excluded. The study got Institute Ethic approval.

### Tools

**Background data sheet:** It was prepared by the researcher to collect information about which includes details such as date of birth, age, sex, religion, education, socio-economic status, marital status, language known etc.

**Social media exploration sheet:** The questions were evolved through focus group discussion of mental health professionals( 10;Having experience of 5 years or more in the area of mental health) and users( 10;using social media for the last one year) to assess the effect of social media on addictive behaviors through focused group discussion (of mental health expert working in the addiction, social media users in the age group of 18-25 years) to cover presentation of addictive behaviors on social media; online peer reaction/peer pressure; users expectancy; initiation, modality of initiation etc.

### Procedure

The study was carried out after obtaining the informed consent of the participants, group administration of Background data sheet, Social Media Exploration Sheet was carried out. 300 completed protocols were included in the study

**Statistical analysis:** The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequencies were used to analyze the demographic details. Chi- Square was used to assess the relationship among the variables and parametric statistic was used for continuous variable. The probability level of 0.05 and 0.01 were used.

**Results**

The study consisted of 300 samples. It included 144 males and 156 females, unmarried attending graduation course belongs to Middle Socioeconomic status to Upper socio-economic status.

Table 1 showed the median age for initiating the use of social media i.e., 13 years for Facebook, 16years for WhatsApp and 17 years for Instagram

Table 2 showed Facebook use was highest among male (51.4 %). WhatsApp use was highest among female (56.7 %) and Instagram use was highest among females (52.33 %)

Table 3 showed the Whatapps /Instgram were the most frequently used modality.

Table 4 showed lack of utility for Twitter and Other Social Media. The utility was high for Whatapps and Instagram.

Table 5 showed 62.3 % reported social media helped in communication with others and 75% share information/videos/ images/information through Social Media.

Table 6 showed disturbance of lifestyle due to use of Social Media. 59.3 % regrets after sharing their photos/videos/personal information. 80.7% reported delays or postponing daily activities due to Social Media Use.

**Discussion & conclusion**

Social media is most popular among youth as it facilitates the sharing of ideas, information, and thoughts through the building of virtual networks and communities. It facilitates social interaction, through blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms (including Facebook) and virtual worlds [20]. The study aimed at exploring the relationship of social media use among youth. This study was conducted among 300 samples which included 144 males and 156 females.

**Table 1.** Social Media Initiation

Social Media	Median	Age	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	13	12	81	37.2
		13	67	30.7
		14	70	32.1
Whatsapp	16	14	24	8.0
		15	80	26.7
		16	162	54.0
		17	30	10.0
Instagram	17	18	4	1.3
		15	13	4.3
		16	80	26.7
		17	92	30.7
		18	115	38.3

**Table 2.** Pattern of Social Media use in relation to gender

Variable	Gender	Frequency	Percentile
Overall Media Use	Male	144	48.0
	Female	156	52.0
Facebook	Male	112	51.4
	Female	106	48.6
Whatsapp	Male	130	43.33
	Female	170	56.7
Instagram	Male	143	47.7
	Female	157	52.33

**Table 3.** Time spent on social media per day

Social Media	Median	Percentile	Percent (Minimum Use)	Percent (Maximum Use)
Facebook	17.50 (Minimum) 45.00 (Maximum)	25	10.00	25.00
		50	17.50	45.00
		75	20.00	60.00
Whatsapp	20.00 (Minimum) 85.00 (Maximum)	25	15.00	60.00
		50	20.00	85.00
		75	30.00	120.00
Instagram	30.00 (Minimum) 90.00 (Maximum)	25	30.00	90.00
		50	30.00	80.00
		75	35.00	120.00
Others (media sharing, social news)	10.00(Minimum) 10.00(Maximum)	25	0.00	0.00
		50	10.00	20.00
		75	15.00	30.00

**Table 4.** Usefulness/ utility of Social Media in daily life.

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	Yes	217
	No	83
Whatsapp	Yes	300
	No	0
Instagram	Yes	300
	No	0
Twitter	Yes	0
	No	300
Others	Yes	123
	No	177

**Table 5.** Factors related to positive use of social media

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Interpersonal Communication	Yes	187
	No	113
Sharing Information/Post	Yes	255
	No	75

**Table 6.** Negative impact of Social Media Use

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Daily routines disturbance	Yes	299
	No	1
Sleep Disturbances	Yes	219
	No	81
Lack of Control	Yes	240
	No	60
Offline Communication	Yes	185
	No	115
Academic Performances	Yes	299
	No	1
Privacy/Security (Sharing Personal Information)	Yes	178
	No	122
Postponing/Delaying Activities	Yes	242
	No	58
Fake Identity	Yes	180
	No	120

The study showed that 37.2% of individual initiate their use of Facebook at the age of 13 years, WhatsApp at the age of 16 years (54.0%) and Instagram was at the age of 18 years (38.3%) (Table 1). These results were compatible with the findings of Kirik, *et al.* who stated that social media use was high among young teenagers of age 14-17 years. Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teen [21]. In relation to the gender,

our study found that Facebook use was highest among male (51.4 %). WhatsApp use was highest among female (56.7%) and Instagram use was highest among females (52.33 %) (Table 2). Research showed that compared with women, men on average spend more time on internet and involve in broader range of online activities. [22]

The data compiled by Statista 2018 showed that 57% of the platform's global account profiles are maintained by male, whereas 43% by female, which is in accordance with our findings. Facebook facilitates online communication and to develop relationship. Users can write private messages, chat, comments, and wall posts – messages that publicly appear on a user's personal page, mostly employed to connect with people and to know them better [23]. Men engages in Facebook to develop new relationship, online dating and group activities [24]. On the other hand, women more willingly use Internet to communication, social support and personal identity such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Social Network Sites [25]. Female use of Instagram largely influenced by body image concerns and social competence [26]. In accordance to our results, research conducted by Montag, *et al.* also found that Females use WhatsApp for significantly longer periods of time than males and younger age was associated with longer duration of WhatsApp use.

### Positive impact of social media use

Web-based social networking gives the advantage for connecting people from all over the world. Respondents in the study, opinioned that Social media is an effective communication tool, which ena users to communicate with other social media users within a frac of time. 62.3 % reported that social media helped in communica with others and 75% share information/videos/images through sc media (Table 5).

In relation to the utility of social media, study found that Adoles perceived Facebook (72.3 %) and WhatsApp (82%) more useful sharing photos, videos, text and other information (Table 4). Howe sample did not report of any usefulness in terms of Twitter and O Social Media. Due to online communication through social me adolescents' developed social connectedness and well- being [27].

### Negative impact of social media use

Despite the popularity of social media among youth for pers communication, entertainment, and social growth. The nega effect of increased social media use [28-30]. Excessive Internet was associated with impaired functioning at work, poor acade performance at schools and colleges, sleep deprivation, p functioning of the immune system and lack of proper exercise [31]. In addition, social media use and adolescent mental health reve that increased social media use was related to online harassment, p sleep, low self-esteem and poor body image. Females are more prone to develop higher depressive symptom in association with social media use [33].

Our current study also revealed that 99.7% experienced disturbances in their daily routines, poor academic performances and sleep disturbance (73%) (Table 6). Adolescents are more prone to involve in Social media for their identity and social interaction, which in contrast limiting the communication between friends, family members and other significant others. Young adults spend less time with their family members and friends in a number of activities (watching TV, eating meals, chatting, shopping and spending time outside) leading to perceived lower social support and Internet Addiction [34]. In addition, study also found that 80.7% involve in postponing / Procrastination activities due to loss of control over social

media use, leading to academic difficulty [35,36]. About 73% reported to have experienced sleep related issues, which is in accordance with the previous research findings that, which stated that heavy internet use is associated with Insomnia and other sleeping disturbances. Interestingly, study highlighted that 60% of social media users faked their identity and 59.3 % regretted sharing personal photos, videos on social media and also reported that lots of Facebook users share partially fraud data in their user profiles [37,38].

The present study is one of the first studies to look into the pattern of Social Media use among youth. The limitations observed in the study that it did not use Interview based qualitative methodology with people. The study also implicated the need to evolve well-being program among Youth to promote healthy lifestyle. The findings can also be used to sensitize Mental Health professionals even at the college level for screening and then evolving psycho educational model for bringing life style changes, emotion coping, family support.

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### Compliance with ethical standard

There was no conflict of interest in relation to present work as well as informed consent of the human subjects had been taken prior to inclusion in the study.

### Disclosure of potential conflict of interest

Not applicable.

### Conflict of interest

Authors of the paper did not have any conflict of interest.

### Statement of human right

The studies have been approved by the Institutional and/or national research ethics committee.

### Research involving human participants and/or animals

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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