



Social Networking Sites- Blessing or Curse

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ABSTRACT

Times have surely changed. The world has been made flat by the World Wide Web. Today, we live in a world where contacting someone, sharing our journeys as well as our thoughts is just one click away. Social networking sites are now available to cater to one's immediate social needs. These networking sites have made it possible for people to chat with friends who live in distant places as well as share with them pictures and videos of whatever we are up to instantly. This article is based on exploratory study of 60 female youths selected from Faculty of Commerce, M.S. University, Vadodara, Gujarat. It includes information related to usage of social networking sites, safety, and usage of SNS for academic purpose, active membership of female youths in communities on networking sites and their views on Social Networking Sites.

KEYWORDS : Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Female Youths, Impact of SNS

INTRODUCTION:

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication among organizations, communities, and individuals.

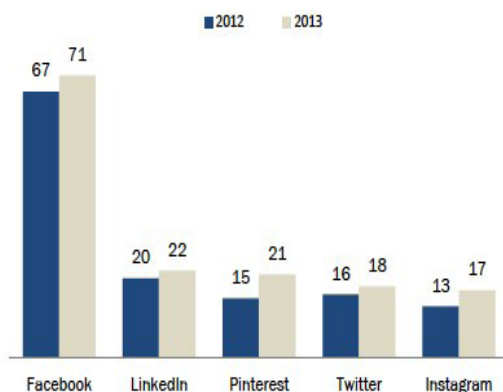
According to the **Pew Research Internet Project**, as of January 2014, 74% of online adults use social networking sites.

In May 2013, **74% of women** were users of social networking sites, compared with **62% of men** as per the **Report of Pew Research Internet Project**.

Today, it is very hard to find a teenager who doesn't have a *Yahoo*, a *Gmail*, a *Facebook*, or a *Twitter* account which they use to keep in touch with friends, to express or share what they have in mind and to use for school-related purposes. As in **previous Pew Research surveys** of social networking usage, Facebook remains the dominant player in the social networking space. Some 71% of online adults are now Facebook users.

Social media sites, 2012-2013

% of online adults who use the following social media websites, by year



Pew Research Center's Internet Project Tracking Surveys, 2012-2013. 2013 data collected August 07 -September 16, 2013. N=1,445 internet users ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. The margin of error for results based on all internet users is +/- 2.9 percentage points.

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No doubt, Social Networking Sites are of great help in the youth's daily life; however, it has positive and negative effects which depend on how a person will utilize it. Social Networking Sites can benefit in numerous ways and that it can make life easier; however, one should keep in mind that everything in life should be taken in moderation — in this case, done in moderation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted from Faculty of Commerce, M.S. University, Vadodara, Gujarat during 2013-14 and was descriptive as well as exploratory in nature using structured interview schedule. Female youths studying in B.Com., Faculty of Commerce were selected for this study. Total 60 female youths of the age group of 17 to 24 Years were selected randomly. Try has been made to understand positive and negative impact of Social Networking Sites on Female Youths. The study included questions on primary information, usage of Social networking sites, information regarding safety measures while using social networking sites, membership in communities on these sites and their feedback

The interview schedule administered on female youths were edited, codified and tabulated. Data was processed and analyzed using MS Excel program.

Major Findings of the Study:

The experiences of the participants are presented in the form of results and interpretation. The section has been further divided into five subsections according to the study's objectives. The main idea with which the research was initiated was to study the impact of Social Networking Sites on youths.

Usage of Social Networking Sites:

Most of the respondents started using Social Networking Sites at the age of 18 to 20 years. Most of them are using Social Networking Sites for more than 3 years. Though some of the sites are banned for the person below 18 years of age, most of the respondents started using such sites in their early ages.

Majority of the respondents (92.98%) are having their profile on Facebook as Facebook is widely used Social Networking Site.

Today Facebook is more popular than Text Books.

Most of the respondents sometimes view these sites. They use these sites for the purpose of instant messaging. Most of the respondents are having 51 to 100 friends on these sites. This is very huge list of friends. Majority of the respondent's parents (91.22%) know that their children are using Social Networking Sites. Most of the respondent's parents have no objection on the use of Social Networking Sites.

Safety:

Most of the respondents are highly concerned about their privacy and also very much active in safeguarding their information submitted on Social Networking Sites. This is the positive aspect. Because today there are people who misuse the information provided by the users

and it is especially serious in case of girls.

Use of Social Networking Sites for Academic Purpose:

Most of the respondents think that student activities on Social Networking Sites do not influence their personal development. Most of them think that these sites are not at all responsible for their lower grades at studies and affect their studies adversely.

Membership of Communities on Social Networking Sites:

While talking about the interest group or community membership, majority of the respondents are member of these groups or communities. The reason behind to be a member of these communities is to stay up to date with the community news or to get updates for most of the respondents. They also put trust on information obtained from communities. Though there are number of communities serving different purposes, majority of the respondents subscribe entertainment communities.

Feedback:

Majority of the respondents think that there is no harmful effect of Social Networking Sites.

The positive thing of social networking sites is that most of the respondents think that these sites contribute in connecting people with others. And majority of the respondents (80.70%) consider Social Networking Sites as blessings as they never had any negative or bad experience of Social Networking Sites.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and findings of the study indicates that the female youths are using social networking sites sometimes. But these sites are quite important for them. Their parents know that their children are using such sites and they don't have any objection on the use of these sites. They post or tweet anything that they have in mind as well as "like" or "share" posts, pictures or links which they think are interesting. Though these sites are considered as a medium to express views, ideas and emotions, they prefer a little to express their ideas and feelings on social networking sites. They think that student activities on Social Networking Sites little influence their personal development. So they do not use social networking sites for study purpose. As far as the privacy is concerned they believe that their personal information provided by them is not used for any other purpose. They are the member of many communities on these sites and they have joined these communities because they find that it will let them stay up-to-date with the community news/ updates. They think that these sites spread information faster than any other media. As they think that there is no harmful effect of such sites they consider such sites as blessings for them.

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