



ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND BEHAVIOUR AMONG TODAY'S YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

People today, use the social media for various reasons and purposes. Social media usage is also considered a young adulthood phenomenon. Sixty young adults (30 women and 30 men) were surveyed using the standardized Online Social Media Questionnaire. An analysis of some sections of their results, indicated that within young adulthood, individuals in the age range of 30-40 years had fewer access to a smartphone and internet-based computer systems. However all the individuals reported knowing about various social media sites like Facebook and most of them actively engaged in using the same, despite a common notion among them that people present themselves differently on these sites.

KEYWORDS : Social Media, Young Adult Behaviour, Facebook, Internet

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge English Dictionary (2019), defines social media as 'forms of media that allow people to communicate and share information using the internet or mobile phones. Perez and Marcello (2011), stated that some of the most prominent reasons why individuals used the social media were to find information about various people, places and subjects, for getting opinions on issues most relevant and pertinent issues, for purposes of entertainment and for socializing with other individuals. Apart from the above-mentioned factors, some of the other reasons, for individual's use of social media is to get information on the happenings in the lives of their contacts, for sharing personal experiences and even for getting promotions.

While there are various social media platforms for the convenience and variety provided to individuals, the requirement for particular devices also emerge for the use of the various websites and other platforms to come into use. The necessity of a smartphone and/computer, tablets etc become a pre requisite for one to enter the social media space. The various ways of social media connections available to an individual are – various websites, platforms for watching and uploading videos and other contents, blogs etc. Some of the popular websites and platforms among individuals are facebook, twitter, youtube, whatsapp, Instagram among various others.

Review Of Literature

Lin, Y.N. et.al (2016) opined that Social media (SM) use is increasing among U.S. young adults, and its association with mental well-being remains unclear. The study done assessed the association between SM use and depression in a nationally representative sample of young adults. 1,787 adults between ages 19 to 32 were asked about SM use and depression. Participants were recruited via random digit dialing and address-based sampling. SM use was assessed by self-reported total time per day spent on SM, visits per week, and a global frequency score based on the Pew Internet Research Questionnaire. Depression was assessed using the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) Depression Scale Short Form. Chi-squared tests and ordered logistic regressions were performed with sample weights. The results showed that the weighted sample was 50.3% female and 57.5% White. Compared to those in the lowest quartile of total time per day spent on SM, participants in the highest quartile had significantly increased odds of depression (AOR = 1.66, 95% CI = 1.14-2.42) after controlling for all covariates. Compared with those in the lowest quartile, individuals in the highest quartile of SM site visits per week and those with a higher global frequency score had significantly increased odds of depression (AOR = 2.74, 95% CI = 1.86-4.04; AOR = 3.05, 95% CI = 2.03-4.59, respectively). All associations

between independent variables and depression had strong, linear, dose-response trends. Results were robust to all sensitivity analyses. It was therefore concluded that SM use was significantly associated with increased depression. Given the proliferation of SM, identifying the mechanisms and direction of this association is critical for informing interventions that address SM use and depression.

Wilson, K. et.al (2010) stated that young people are increasingly using social networking sites (SNSs). This study sought to predict young adults' use of SNSs and addictive tendency toward the use of SNSs from their personality characteristics and levels of self-esteem. University students (N = 201), aged 17 to 24 years, reported their use of SNSs and addictive tendencies for SNSs use and completed the NEO Five-Factor Personality Inventory and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Multiple regression analyses revealed that, as a group, the personality and self-esteem factors significantly predicted both level of SNS use and addictive tendency but did not explain a large amount of variance in either outcome measure. The findings indicated that extroverted and unconscientious individuals reported higher levels of both SNS use and addictive tendencies. Future research should attempt to identify which other psychosocial characteristics explain young people's level of use and propensity for addictive tendencies for these popular Internet sites.

Perez, M. and Gomez, J. (2011) were also of a similar opinion and said that online social networking (OSN) sites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter are among the most popular sites around the World. In the case of Mexico, these sites are considered to be in the top. Users have different tools for reading and sharing information with his friends and/or contacts and for searching for new users that might have common interests. These sites have changed the way people get connected to each other on the web. The popularity of these sites is represented on its registered users: as today Facebook has about 500 million, and Twitter about 175 million.. Identifying such factors would provide important information for improving current information systems by including social software characteristics as well as to design new high impact applications for online social networks. Through the research the results obtained through a focus group study to identify the most important issues and perceptions about OSN were understood.

METHODOLOGY

A standardized Online Social Media questionnaire was administered on 60 individuals (30 men and 30 women) between the ages of 20-30 years. The same questionnaire was also administered on 60 individuals (30 men and 30 women) between the ages of 30-40 years. The results obtained from the same were then graphically represented

and analysed further.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

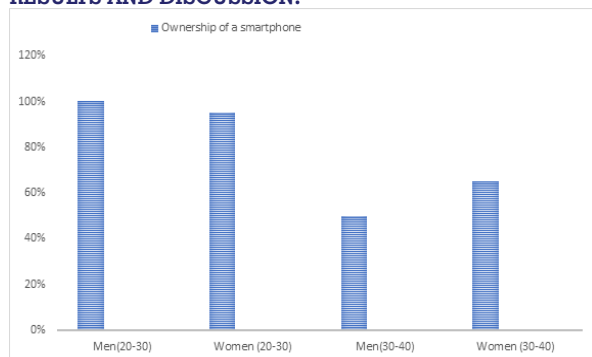


Fig1.1 Ownership of a smartphone by young men and women.

The above table indicates towards the possession of a smartphone by young adults. While all individuals in the age range of (20-30) reported having a smartphone, individuals in the age range of (30-40) did not feel the same way. Even among this age range, only 40 % of the men reported having a smartphone, leaving more than the average without a smartphone. While 60% of the women had a smartphone, a significant minority of 40% reported not having access to a smartphone. As a phone is something which an individual carries for a significant portion of the day, the ownership of a smartphone, acts as a catalyst towards exposure to social media.

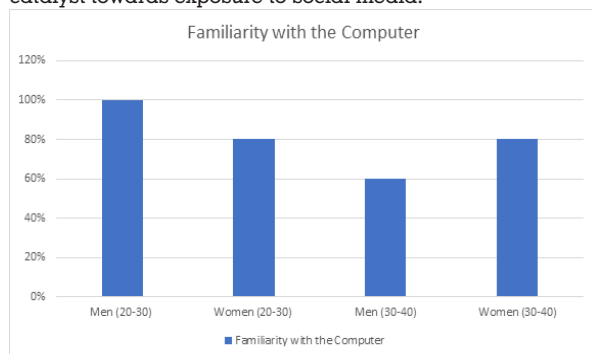


Fig 1.2 Familiarity With Computer Operations By Young Men And Women.

When asked about their familiarity with the computer, the responses received from the sample, varied greatly. While all the men in the age range of 20-30 claimed to be familiar with operations of a computer, a significant dip was seen among the men in the age range of 30-40 years. Women however, remained consistent across the age group of 20-30 and 30-40. Most women (80%) knew the functioning of a computer and put it to use. This also indicates towards the fact that women and men may have differences in their knowledge of a particular device, based on the use and requirement.

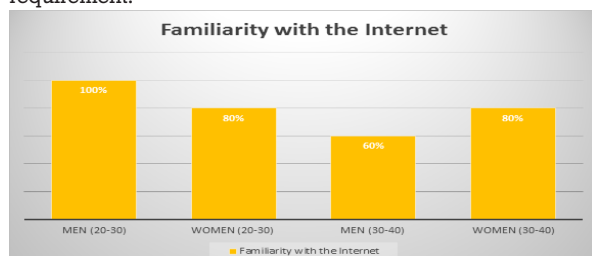


Fig 1.3 Familiarity with the internet and its awareness among young adults

When asked about their familiarity with the internet, the results obtained from the sample, replicated their response from the previous question. Although all the men in the age of 20-30 years, agreed on knowing and using the internet, a significant minority of 40% of the men within the age range of 30-40 responded not being familiar, pointing towards the probability of young adults being on the internet, not being a fact. The women of both the sub age groups, showed the same results with most of the women (80%) being familiar with the internet and its usage. This also indicates towards the probability of women being more updated and consistently keeping themselves abreast of the happenings and demands of the day.

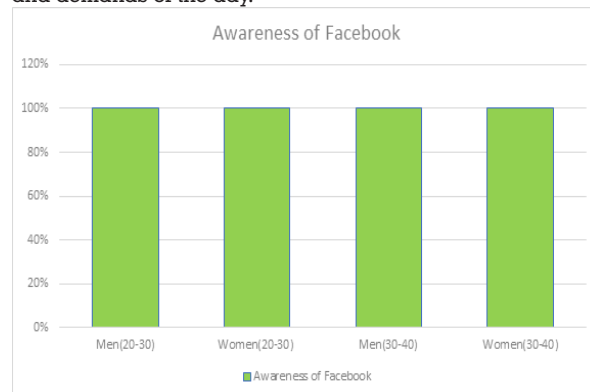


Fig 1.4 Awareness of Social Media sites like Facebook

There was a unanimous affirmative answer by the entire sample, when asked about the awareness an individual had of various social media websites like Facebook, as shown in Figure 1.4. This goes on to prove, that whether or not an individual possesses a smart phone, has access to the internet and other mediums to connect to these social media sites, they were fully aware of the existence and the purpose fulfilled by these social media websites, specially Facebook. The awareness is more for websites like Facebook compared to twitter and the like, based probably on the fact that it has been in existence for a much longer time than the others.

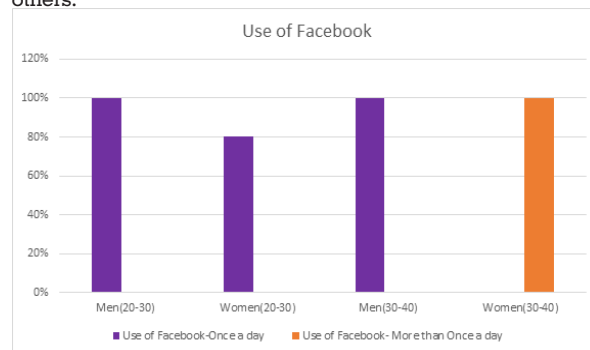


Fig 1.5 Frequency of usage of Facebook among young adults

Enunciating the previous data presented, most individuals answered in the affirmative, on being on the social media website of Facebook. Apart from that men of both the age groups namely 20-30-year olds and 30-40-year olds, reported using the application at least once a day to post pictures and /or thoughts and stay connected with their friends and acquaintances. While the younger half of the younger women, showed a significant minority of 20% of them not using Facebook at all, the contrary is experienced of the latter half of the young women, where all of them not only engage in social media activity on Facebook, but engage in the same, multiple times a day. Social media

likeness, usage and knowledge may therefore not always be a youth phenomenon and is not gender specific either.

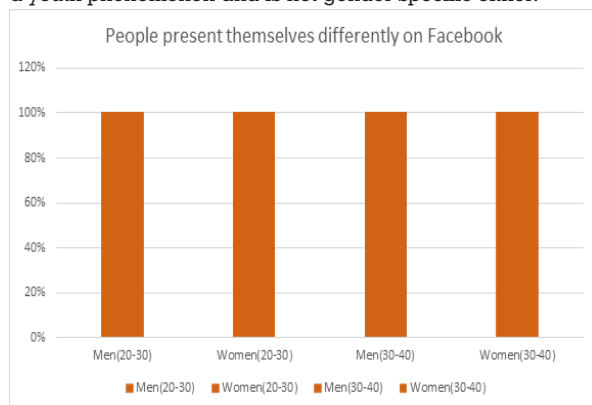


Fig 1.6 Opinion of Young Adults on the way people present themselves on social media platforms

All categories in the sample, as shown in Figure 1.6 were of the opinion that people presented themselves differently on social media (Facebook) than they were in real life. In spite of each and every individual feeling strongly about people being hypocritical and fake on social media websites, almost each and every one of them was on the same and engaged actively once a day if not more in the social media activities.

CONCLUSION:

It may be concluded that despite the young adulthood phase being a phase where people are expected to be technologically advanced and up to date, significant minorities of men and women, did not have proper access to a smartphone and computer with internet. Despite the above-mentioned restrictions and limitations, it does not stop them from having knowledge about and being on the various social media platforms, especially Facebook. The young adults unanimously feel that people project themselves differently on these social media websites, than they are in reality, yet choose to be on these platforms and actively engage in the procedures involved on a high frequency.

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