

Usage of Social Media Trends among Adolescents: A Demographic Perspective

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Abstract:

Over the recent years, Social media has attracted millions of users, its usage has enhanced generally throughout the world and many of them have integrated these sites into their daily practices for various reasons and purposes. India is on second rank in terms of number of internet users in the world, with a versatile social media and mobile audience. The present study examined social media usage among adolescents in relation to demographic variables on a sample of 1200 students in four districts of Punjab. Data was collected by using social media usage scale prepared by investigator herself. The findings of the study illuminate many noteworthy trends. Firstly, a significant difference in social media usage found between boys and girls, indicating that gender plays a role in shaping adolescents' engagement with these platforms. Secondly, there is a notable difference in social media usage patterns among students from urban and rural areas, underlining the influence of geographic location on adolescents' digital habits. These findings of the present study contribute to our understanding of the evolving landscape of social media usage among adolescents in the context of India, a nation with a substantial online presence. The study underscores the need to consider demographic factors such as gender and geographic location when examining social media usage among adolescents. This knowledge can be valuable for educators, parents, and policymakers as they seek to navigate the implications of social media usage for the holistic development and well-being of young individuals in India.

Keywords: Social media usage, adolescents, demographic variables.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence generally refers to the period in which a person is no longer a child nor yet an adult. This is a period of rapid growth and a time of extensive re-organisation and most important in human life. This period begins with puberty and ends with accession of growth. It emerges from childhood and merges into adulthood. It can be said as a transmission from childhood period to maturity in various areas i.e. physical, social, intellectual and emotional. This stage is considered as a crucial in many aspects. A minute disposition in any way can turn them on different roads.

In the present world, which is called the digital age, computers and internet have gained an absolutely central importance in human life and social media had a prominent role in this picture. The advent of social media platforms opens up a broader realm of experiences for adolescents, shaping their developmental journey. The use of social media websites is the common activity for today's adolescents; they are sometimes misused, which may lead to social media addiction (Masthi et al., 2018). They integrate social media seamlessly in their daily life, making use of it as a mundane habit (Purcell et al., 2012). Majority of social media users are teenagers, the so-called digital generation. Day by day the

number of users of social media is increasing in India. Active social media users are 197 million (14% of the population) in India. India has the highest rate of smartphones users (Jayalakshmi et al., 2017) and second largest mobile phones user's country with over 900 million users (Garelli & Ranu, 2017). 92% of teenagers are active on social media (Pew Research Centre, 2015). Studies identified that 13–17 years age group as particularly heavy users of social media. Almost three-quarters of adolescents aged 15 to 17 use a smartphone (Lenhart et al., 2015; Pew Research Centre, 2015).

1.1 Social media usage

Social media is a web-based platform that enables users to create social networks (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Social media is defined as a group of internet applications built on the ideological and technical foundations of web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media are online resources that people use to share content: video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, humour, opinion, gossip, news (Drury, 2008). It allows users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interests with people through social networking sites. (Dykeman, 2008).

Social media is double edged. Nowadays students are spending more time on various social networking platforms. Students utilize social networking sites to express their ideas, keep in contact with friends and family, convey significant life events and documents, and get information through news and updates from news agencies (Doleck et al., 2018). Its websites are causing alarming changes in the brains of young users. Most of the social media users are addicted in some or other way. The negative concerns of social media among students range from youth privacy, safety, time consumption, health issues, psychological wellbeing and academic performance (Khurana, 2015). Social media addiction has a deteriorious effect on physical, psychological health and behavioral health of the users in their formative years which could drastically affect their quality of life and endanger the lives of adolescents. It causes lack of concentration, change in the thought process as well as the change in brain anatomy (Ha et al., 2017). While social media is talked in a very negative way, there are many positive points which favour social media and its impact on teens in terms of accessing course contents, video clips, transfer of the instructional notes etc. (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Turel & Serenko (2012) summarizes three theoretical perspectives regarding the explanation of social media addiction behaviors. These are discussed as follows:

- **Cognitive-behavioral Model:** This model explains that abnormal social media usage arises from maladaptive cognitions and is magnified by various environmental factors which leads to compulsive and or/addictive social media.
- **Social Skill Model:** This model emphasizes that abnormal social media arises because people lack self-presentational skills and prefer virtual communication to face-to-face interaction, and it eventually leads to compulsive and/or addictive use of social media.
- **Socio-cognitive Model:** According to this model, abnormal social media usage arises due to the expectation of positive outcomes, combined with internet self-efficacy and deficient Internet self-regulation which leads to social media addiction.

1.2 Review of related literature

Gencer & Koc (2012) explored internet usage patterns and demographic characteristics. Regarding gender breakdown the proportion of females was larger than those of males (Akbar et al., 2019). The

significant gender differences in social media usage were found in favour of males (Azizi et al., 2019). A study showed locale was not found significant predictor of social media usage (Koc & Gulyagci, 2013). Aggarwal (2019) investigated the purpose and impact of social networking sites among some selected social networking sites users' students with an age group of 16 to 22 years and teenagers of Punjab. Saikia & Kumar (2019) revealed in their findings that 23% male students and 20% female students' motives behind social media usage are chatting, get exam related and classroom related updates, to solve their personal issues and career queries.

1.3 Operational Definitions of variables

Social Media Usage: Social media usage refers to description of school students' engagement with social media platforms measuring the dimensions of motive, belief, addiction and malfunction using a structured and comprehensive social media usage scale developed by investigator herself designed to assess various aspects of how students engage with social media platforms and its potential impacts on them.

1.4 Rationale of the study

With the passage of time, technology has become an inseparable part of social living and it has affected each and every aspect related to human beings. The human urge to communicate with near and far ones also gain acceleration with the birth of internet (technological advancements) and internet related applications termed as social media. Today's generation is living in a virtual world with no defined geographical specifications. Adolescents are the future leaders of the nation. As UNICEF (2002) stated that it is demand of the time to address different issues related to them as population of adolescents is increasing day by day. Like excessive dependency on anything would result in some form of addiction (Biological, Psychological or Behavioral), so is in the case of excessive use of social media. Earlier researchers had suggested that excessive use of new technologies and more specifically social media usage may be particularly problematic to young people (Echeburua & deCorral, 2010). Due to increased awareness that social media usage is a legitimate concern, efforts to explain why and how adolescents are deeply involved in this world of social media has become an important research issue. Moreover due to inconclusive results related to effect of social media usage on adolescents especially in Indian context, it was thought worthwhile to study the social media usage among adolescents in relation to demographic variables.

1.4.1 Statement of the Problem

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1.4.2 Aim of the study

The aim of the present study is to explore the relationship of social media usage with demographic variables like gender and locale of school.

1.4.3 Objectives of the study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To investigate the significance of difference in social media usage of adolescents on the basis of gender.

- To investigate the significance of difference in social media usage of adolescents on the basis of locale of school.

1.4.4 Hypotheses of the study

The present study was undertaken with the following hypotheses:

- There is no significant difference in social media usage of adolescents on the basis of gender.
- There is no significant difference in social media usage of adolescents on the basis of locale of school.

II. METHOD

In the present study, descriptive method of research was employed by investigator to explore the social media usage among adolescents in relation to demographic variables.

2.1 Sample

The simple random sampling techniques was used on the sample of 1200 school students and among them 600 were boys and 600 were girls studying in eleventh standard in various government and private schools located in rural and urban areas of four districts in Punjab.

2.2 Tools

In this study one tool is used which is described below:

2.2.1 Social Media Usage Scale: It was constructed and standardized by researcher herself to assess adolescents' social media usage. A five-point Likert scale was developed and used to identify the social media usage of adolescents and its dimensions (motives, belief, addiction and malfunction). The scale consists of 41 items. The reliability of the scale was calculated by using Cronbach Alpha which came out to be 0.82 which indicates that the social media usage scale may be considered highly reliable.

2.3 Procedure

The purpose of the present study is to examine the social media usage in relation to demographic variables among adolescents of Punjab. The data was collected from a stratified random sample of 1200 students of different schools of Jalandhar, Moga, Ferozepur and Barnala districts with the help of socio-demographic sheet and social media usage scale. These scales were administered to subjects individually who were assured that the information given by them would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purposes. The scales were administered on the eleventh grade students that were selected randomly from the selected schools.

III RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

T-test was used for analysis and interpretation of results and following results are found.

Table 1: Difference between social media usage of adolescents Boys and Girls

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-ratio
Boys	584	138.17	16.01	8.61**
Girls	616	145.46	13.23	

**** Significant at .01 level**

*** Significant at .05 level**

(Source: Primary data collected for the study)

The perusal of table-1 revealed that the mean value of boys is 138.17 and mean value of girls is 145.46 and standard deviation value of boys is 16.01 and girls is 13.23. The calculated t-value for social media usage with respect to gender is 8.61 which is significant at 0.01 level. It means that social media usage among boys and girls adolescents differ significantly. The comparison of mean scores of boys and girls on social media usage further revealed that the social media usage is significantly higher among girl adolescents as compared to their boys counterpart. Hence the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the social media usage of adolescents on the basis of gender stands rejected.

Table 2: Difference between social media usage of adolescents on the basis of locale of school

Area	N	Mean	S.D	t-ratio
Rural	608	139.22	14.19	6.36**
Urban	592	144.68	15.49	

**** Significant at .01 level**

*** Significant at .05 level**

(Source: Primary data collected for the study)

According to table no. 2 the mean value of students studying in rural area is 139.22 and mean value of students studying in urban area is 144.68 and standard deviation value of students studying in rural area is 14.19 and students studying in urban area are 15.49. The t-value for social media usage with respect to locale of school is 6.36 which is significant at 0.01 level. It means that mean score of social media usage of rural and urban school students differ significantly. The comparison of mean scores of rural and urban students on social media usage further revealed that the social media usage is significantly higher among urban school students as compared to their rural counterpart. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the social media usage of adolescents on the basis of locale of school stands rejected.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, this study brought out an understanding between social media usage and demographic variables among adolescents. It revealed that there is significant difference in social media usage of adolescents on the basis of gender and locale of school. But, to have wider understanding, the sample size should be increased.

V. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study may lend a helping hand to stakeholders of educational institutions in identifying users who excessively use social media and suggesting them with healthy usage of social media. Social media has turned into an important part of our life today. So it is emphatically recommended to check adolescents' activities on social networking websites and don't give them a chance to utilize social media on long term basis. It is likewise a solid proposal for international and Government cyber control to participate and prohibit these social networking websites, other than government and jurisdiction, every parent should closely restrict the use of social networks on their children and secure their future. Moreover they better understand the phenomena of social media usage

and its consequences. Female adolescents must be aware about their social media usage. They must track their time spent on social media and set limits to avoid excessive usage. Urban students must provide skill-based and engaging assignments so that they can develop their skills instead of spending excessive time on social media.

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