

A Study on the Engagement of Indian Students on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Social media is an online platform that helps users to connect with people and share thoughts in real-time, globally. Among all the recent social media platforms, Facebook is very popular among young persons and they are known to spend several hours per day using and interacting through Facebook. This study aimed at studying the engagement of Social Work students of an Indian university, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi on Facebook. This research examines their patterns of engagements in terms of time, privacy, advertisements etc. on Facebook. The research also attempts to understand the usage pattern, network patterns and the routine activities of the students.

Key words: Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Facebook, Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia.

INTRODUCTION

Social Media is a tool to build social networks correlations among those who share common interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. Initially, social media was used for making online friends, developing relationships, business contacts and interacting with global masses. Recently, it has been used for mobilizing youngsters for social causes as well. Social media differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence.

According to Nielsen (2012), Internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of sites. At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 99 percent to 123 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 66 billion minutes in July, 2011. Among the social media platforms, Facebook is very popular among youngsters and research shows that anywhere between 85 and 99 percent of college students use Facebook (Hargittai, 2008). Users use it for making new contacts, being in touch and also for entertainment. Being on Facebook has become a new social trend especially among students. Their virtual presence on Facebook has become important for them in their real life. Since its inception, in 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook has been gaining popularity all over world. According to www.statista.com, market leader Facebook is the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts and 1.59 billion monthly active users in April 2016.

It is important to mention that India has the largest chunk of youth population, which adds scope for the growth of Facebook. According to the Facebook's recent global friendship map,

India is one of the countries that come under the category of 'densest use' countries, where Facebook is used the most to make friends across the world.

Recent advances in Information Technology suggest that today's society is undergoing a 'communication revolution'. As a result, the means of communication among students and with their members of family, friends and teachers are facing rapid and vigorous changes and will probably continue in the near future.

Scholarly review of new media and everyday family life points out that more research is needed concerning the impact of media usage on interpersonal relationships among college students (Wealthera & Ramsay; 2006). In this direction, the range of studies conducted to deal with the usages of SNS among social work students is negligible in India. Hence, the proposed study makes an attempt to bridge this gap, to some extent, by concentrating on the engagement of social work students on social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND USES

The realm of social media is increasingly emerging as the subject of research in the field of social sciences. Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the various aspects of social media. Many studies have been conducted around the world to investigate how these sites may influence issues of identity, privacy, social capital, youth culture, education and interpersonal relationships. In this regard, social media platform Facebook is a site in which users can share thoughts, ideas, pictures and other content with friends and family members, and to connect with either former or new friends and this is very popular among the university students (Alexander, 2006; Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Golder,

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Wilkinson, & Huberman, 2007; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Selwyn, 2007; Stutzman, 2006).

The usage and trends of social networking sites among the college students have been studied by several scholars (Hussain, 2012; Manjunatha, 2013; Ezumah, 2013). Akyildiz and Argan (2011) examined the usage of Facebook, a significant component of social networking sites among Turkish undergraduate students. The study identifies the purposes of using Facebook and also the time spent on it.

Tiryakioglu and Erzurum (2011) investigated the opinions and of instructors regarding use of Facebook in the Faculty of Communication Sciences at Anadolu University in Turkey. The study finds that 74% instructors have a Facebook account and they spend less than half an hour per day on Facebook. The main purpose of using Facebook is to communicate with friends. They also observe that Facebook can provide important contributions to social interactions among students as well as communications between instructors and students.

Lim (2010) described the use of Facebook as a platform for academic discussions among distance learners. It offers a glimpse into how mobile learning via SMS together with Facebook was used to support and enhance the blended learning approach at Open University, Malaysia for three courses; Learning Skills for Open and Distance Learners, Company Law and Renal Nursing. The study found that Facebook does have the potential to draw distance learners to engage in meaningful academic conversations but the quantity and quality of posts very much depends on the timing as well as the topics of discussion.

Roblyer (2010) conducted a comparative study among college faculty and students regarding use and perception of Facebook social network. The study found that students are more likely to use Facebook for communication with friends and favor to support classroom work rather than faculty.

Xia (2009) surveyed the Facebook Groups at two major research universities in the USA to discover whether these groups are good practices for library marketing by examining group discussion transcripts and history. The study found that the success of Facebook groups can be controlled by the active organization of librarian and by using more general topics to keep discussions alive. It also finds that Facebook groups should target not only students but also faculty and staff in support of their research and teaching.

RQ1: What types of profile of the students of Social Work of Jamia Millia Islamia who are using Facebook?

RQ2: What are the pattern of use in terms of time, privacy etc. spent by the students on Facebook?

RQ3: What are the types of engagement on Facebook by the students?

METHOD

An exploratory study is conducted to examine the pattern of usages and engagement on social media especially Facebook of Social Work students of Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. Sample is collected from the active Facebook users of the students of the Dept. of Social Work. An interview scheduled is used to elicit the desired information. Sample is drawn on a stratified basis, keeping in mind sex and level of education i.e. Class. So, there are 12 students (6 Male and 6 Female) of M.A. (Social Work) of first semester and 20 students (10 Male and 10 Female) of M.A. (Social Work) of fourth semester for this research.

For this research, the researcher distributed questionnaire to all the students of the Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India in order to determine the users of Social Networking Sites. After the collection of the entire questionnaire, all are decoded and analyzed by SPSS (Version 20).

A purposive sample of 32 students was selected for eliciting the study data. The respondents were being classified on the basis of semesters, gender as male & female students and were on these categories give equal share.

The researcher has made use of the methods of questionnaire to gather the primary data required for the study. Primarily the study is a questionnaire based survey of usage of Social Networking Sites especially Facebook among social work students of Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. The simple and well organized questionnaire was designed in such a manner as to collect the relevant data from the study sample. The appropriate questions were added in the questionnaire and questions that could create confusion were eliminated. The questionnaire was designed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. In the questionnaire all close-ended questions have been added. It contains different types of questions which have been framed to obtain relevant information on various aspects of engagement on Facebook.

Before the final distribution of the questionnaire it was pretested among the study group, and finalized based on the response received. The

questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section of the questionnaire generated 'Demographic data' containing general information about the respondents. It covered such aspects as class, semester, sex, age in completed years and time duration since when using Facebook. In second section, it aimed at creating on social profile of Facebook users, contains questions that elicit information on engagement of Facebook which encompasses questions regarding various aspects of Facebook, time spent on Facebook, functions, communities/groups, joined, security concern etc.

The researcher used SPSS, version 20 to analyses the primary data of the research: Frequency and Percentage. First, frequency tables have been used to analysis how frequency students used Facebook. Second, the technique of percentage is used to determine the percentage of the respondents out of total population in terms of frequency of using Facebook. Through this, the researcher also determined the percentage of the respondents who are affected by the Facebook.

Social media is used by different groups of people. Its usages among college students are particularly high. The students use Facebook for numerous purposes. Their usage pattern is different from any other group of people. In this context understanding the social profile of Facebook users assumes significance.

It is believed that basic variables such as gender, age, education etc. play a vital role in the usage pattern of Facebook among students. Hence, this section deals with the demographic profile of students, who are the study respondents. This part contains basic information about educational level, gender, age status of the students.

It is evident that the respondents of this study are divided uniformly to land a representative character to our sample. The above table indicates that out of 32 students 12 (37.5%) are studying in the M.A. Social Work, second semester class and 20 (62.5%) students are studying in M.A. Social Work, fourth semester.

Since both type of the students uses Facebook extensively, it was decided to select an equal number in each category. Out of 32 students, 9 students are 21 years and 22 years old, 7 students are 23 years old, 3 are 24 years old and 25 years old and one student is 26 years old. It is found that most of the students are 21 and 22 years old. The mean of male students is 22.6 and mean of female students is 21.5.

Majority of the students are using Facebook from 6 to 7 years and their percentage are 28.1. The

percentage of the students who are using Facebook from 8 years is 15.6%, from 4 to 5 years is 9.4%, from 9 years is 6.3% and from one year is 3.1%. Most of the female students are using Facebook from 7 years and male students are using this platform from 6 years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Fifty percent of the students have the range of 251-500 friends on Facebook. Twenty five percent students have friends in the range of 51-250. 18.8% students have friends in range of 501-1000. Only 3.1% students have either less than 50 friends or more than 1000 friends.

Only 12.5% male students have 501-1000 Facebook friends but this percentage of female students is high and that is 12.5%. No single female student has less than 50 and more than 1001 Facebook friends. 6.2% male students have more than 1001 Facebook friends.

Majority of the students are following 6-20 range of Facebook groups and they are 62.5%. Among these students, 3.1% students have either following no single group or following the range of 21-100 Facebook groups. 31.3% students are following 1-5 range of groups. Each female student must follow any group. 31.2% male and female students follow 1-5 numbers of groups while 62.5% male and female students follow 6-20 number of Facebook groups. No single male student follows more than 20 groups but the percentage of female students is 6.2.

To understand the time spent by the students on Facebook in a week, Table 4.5 has the related data. It emerges from the data that the majority of our sample students (43.8%) spend 1-5 hours in a week. Those who use Facebook between 6-10 hours, 11-20 hours and 21-30 hours are 37.5%, 15.5% and 3.1% respectively. There is no single student who is live on Facebook 24 hours. Equal number of male and female students spent time between 1-5 hours intervals and 6-10 hours intervals and their percentage are 43.8 and 37.5 respectively. No female students spent time more than 20 hours on Facebook.

Majority of the Social Work students post his/her status less than a week and their percentage is 68.8%. Although, 12.5% students post their status around once a week, 15.6% students share their status a few times in a week. Only 3.1% students post their status around once a day. Majority of the male and female students post their status less than week and their percentage is 68.8%.

The very unique features of Facebook are comments, like, share. Facebook users also troll with the other users' post. Before online models of

communications took the world under their siege, letters were the chief mode of keeping-in-touch. The main purpose of letter writing was to exchange information, but today the scope of what we mean by information itself has widened. So it is interesting to know the type of activity what users do.

The nature of formal activities in which Facebook users engage are like, comments, share and Troll. Majority of the students i.e. 53.1% students like the post of the others, 21.9% users are involved in trolling, and only 15.6% and 9.4% students are commenting and share the others posts respectively. It is also find that the majority of the students like he posts of the others and the percentage of male and female students are 56.2% and 50.0% respectively. Commenting habits of the female students is more than male students, but male students' habit to troll than female students. The percentage of male and female students who troll is 31.2 and 12.5 respectively.

When we asked about the method of accepting the friend request of strangers or known persons, most of the students' response is that they accepted only for known persons. They are 90.6%. Only 9.4% students said that they accept the friend request of strangers. Hundred percent female students accept the friendship request of known persona but the percentage of male students in this section is 81/2%. 18.8% students accept the friend request of strangers.

It is also found that the status of the 53.1% students are private, the status of 40.6% students are public. But, 6.3% students have no knowledge about his/her status, which is public or private. 81.2% male students' posts are public but 100% female students post are private. 12.5% male students have no knowledge about their posts which are public or private.

Majority of the students never use hash tags when posting their post on Facebook and their population is 40.6%. Although, 34.4% students rarely use this, 18.8% students sometimes use and 6.3% students often use hash tags. 43.8% female and 37.5% male students never use hash tags. 12.5% female students often use this.

The 46.9% students never click on the Facebook Ads and 31.3% rarely and 21.9% sometimes click on these Ads. On the ground of the Facebook's promotion posts, 53.1% students' response is that they okay, 21.9% students responses is that they exist, 18.8% response is that they should not exist and only 6.3% response is that they are great. 50% female students never click on this.

There are 14 activities identified, which are generally used by Facebook users especially students. In this regard, 62.5% students rarely, 15.6% sometimes, 12.5% somewhat frequently and 9.4% never posting status updates. 68.8% female students rarely posing status update. 31.2% male students sometimes posing status update.

On the ground of link sharing, 53.1% students do sometimes, 25.0% do rarely, 18.8% do frequently and 3.1% never share. 56.2% female students have a habit of sharing links on their Facebook status.

Only 40.6% students sometimes sending private message but the percentage of very frequently, somewhat frequently, rarely and never are 9.4, 15.6, 25.6 and 9.4 respectively. Only 43.8% female students send private message to their friends through Facebook.

Most of the students i.e. 40.6% students commenting on users' status, wall posts and pictures etc., but the percentage of doing very frequently, sometimes, rarely are 6.3, 28.1 and 25.0 respectively. 43.8% male students sometimes commenting on other Facebook friends' status, wall posts, pictures.

In the response of chatting on Facebook chat, 37.5% students are rarely chat, 31.3% sometimes, 18.8% somewhat frequently and 12.5% very frequently chatting with their friends. 25% female students somewhat frequently chat with friends through Facebook. 37.5% male students sometimes chat with friends through Facebook. 43.8% female and 31.2% male students rarely chat with their friends' through Facebook. 18.8% male and 6.2% female students very frequently chat on Facebook.

The checking to see what someone is up to is a normal habit, so 40 % students sometimes involved in this activity, 21.9% either do somewhat frequently or rarely. Only 15.6% students never do this. 50% female students sometimes check other's activities. 25% female students never check other's activities.

Among all the students, 46.9% students never creating or RSVPing to events, 28.1% rarely do, 18.8% sometimes and 6.3% somewhat frequently do this, 43.8% male students and 50% female students never create or RSVPing events on Facebook.

43.6% students sometimes post photos on his/her Facebook status, the percentage of rarely post is 25.0%, somewhat frequently is 18.8%, and very frequently is 9.4%. Only 3.1% students never post the photo on their status. 50% female and 37.5% male students sometimes share photos on

Facebook. 12.5% female students very frequently shared photos on Facebook.

Among the students, 37.5% rarely, 28.1% sometimes, 18.8% never, 9.4% somewhat frequently and 6.3% very frequently tags photos. 37.5% female students have habit of tagging photos. 6.2% female and 12.5% female students never do this.

The percentage of the students who are somewhat frequently viewing photos are 46.9%, sometimes and very frequently are 18.8% and never are 3.1%. 37.5% male and 56.2% female students somewhat frequently viewing photos on Facebook,

Among the students, 56.3% students are rarely posting videos on his/her Facebook Wall. The data of never posting and sometimes posting are 34.4% and 9.4% respectively. 37.5% male and 31.2% female students never post videos on their Facebook wall. On the question of tagging videos, 53.1% students never, 28.1% rarely and 18.8% sometimes tag videos. 70% male and 31.2% female students never tagged any videos yet.

Most of the students view videos on Facebook. The data of sometimes, sometimes frequently, very frequently, rarely and never view videos are 28.1%, 25.0%, 18.8% and 6.3% respectively. 25% male and 12.5% female students view videos very frequently. 6.2% male and female students never look this.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students have 251-500 Facebook friends. No single female student has more than 1000 students and less than 50 friends. All the female students are the members of the Facebook group and they are in the maximum twenty Facebook groups. Most of the students spend 1-5 hours per week on Facebook and update their status several times in a day. Most of the Social Work students like the post of others. All of the male students never share the others' posts. Female students never accept friend request of the strangers. The profiles of all the female students are private while 81.2% male students are public. Most of the students never use hash tags on their posts and never click Facebook Ads but think the Ads are okay. Most of the female students are rarely posing status update but sending private messages to her friends. Female students are rarely chatting with friends through Facebook.

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