

**EMERGING TREND OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING AMONG
ADOLESCENTS- AN ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

In the present study an attempt has been made to analysis the use of social networking websites by adolescents in terms of the types of sites being accessed, time spent on these sites, purpose of using these sites and their parents' reaction. Study also aimed to find out whether the use of social networking sites account for addiction or not. A survey questionnaire was implemented on randomly selected 600 adolescents (15-17 years of age) of Udaipur city along with a self-constructed social networking websites addiction scale. The study confirmed facebook as the most popular social networking websites among adolescents. The results shows that 34.22% of adolescents were spending 30min to 60min per session on these sites. Most of the adolescents were using these sites for social and entertainment purposes. It was found that 7% of adolescents were addicted users of these sites.

Keywords: Social Networking Website, Adolescent ,Addiction

Introduction:

The current wave of social networking websites has revolutionized the way we communicate with each other beyond geographical, political or economic boundaries. Multiple features offered by these websites, gained them wider acceptability. The number of users of social networking sites is increasing exponentially. According to a **e-Marketer** report “ *Worldwide Social Network Users: 2013 Forecast and Comparative Estimates* , 20.1% of total world's population used social networking websites in the year 2012 and it was estimated in the report to increase up to 25.3% by 2014(**Source: eMarketer report Nov 2013**) The fastest growth in social networking sites usage is happening in less-developed markets, like in India. Social Networking User's

penetration in India is around 8.5% of the entire population. (estatsindia.com report on “*Social media usage in India 2013*”). The Social Media Users demographics are skewed in the favor of “Young and Urban Youths”.

Social networking websites nowadays have become the most popular destination of adolescents as these sites provide powerful new ways for them to create and navigate their social environment. The adolescent’s use of this social media occurs simultaneously with their developing identity, dwindling emotions, emerging sexuality and social development. These social sites provide a space in which identity can be explored and experimented with (Schmitt et al, 2008), but in a virtual environment not the real one. This virtual environment may influence the adolescents in one or more other ways in various domains such as psychology, philosophy, social and educational.

There is also an element of addictiveness in social networking sites and adolescents are being endeared more and more to this addiction. Addiction to these sites largely depends on the amount of time spent and the purpose for which adolescents are using social networking sites

Objectives of the study

- 1.) To analyze the use of social networking websites by adolescents in terms of following:
 - a.) Type of site
 - b.) Gender wise use
 - c.) First Source of information
 - d.) Amount of time spent
 - e.) Purpose
 - f.) Parents reactions
 - g.) Reason if not using these websites
- 2.) To identify the addicted users

Research Methodology

1. *Locale of the study*- Geographically present study is confined to Udaipur district of Rajasthan
2. *Research Method*- Survey method was used
3. *Selection of Sample*- 600 adolescents (300 boys and 300 girls) were randomly selected from four co educational English medium schools of Udaipur city.
4. *Measurement tools used*
 - a.) A self constructed questionnaire on use of social networking sites was used which includes broadly the demographic information and question on type of site accessing, time spent and purpose of using them.
 - b.) A self constructed social networking sites addiction scale was used to identify the addicted users

Major Findings:

1. It was found that 69% (app.) of the studied adolescents (N=600) were using social networking sites while 31 % (app.) were not the member of any such sites.
2. The percentage of adolescent users and adolescent nonusers of social networking sites with respect to gender are given in table 1.

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of adolescent users and non users of social networking sites

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	Users(N=415)	Non-users(N=185)
Boys	59.76%	28.11%
Girls	40.24%	71.89%

As shown in table 1, Adolescent boys used social networking sites more as compared to the adolescent girls.

3. The present study proved the popularity of facebook among adolescents as shown in Table 2

Table 2 : Type of websites used by adolescents (N=415)

S.No.	Type of Website	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Facebook	411	99.04
2	Orkut	106	23.61
3	Twitter	117	28.19
4	Myspace	2	0.48
5	Hi5	0	0
6	Linkedin	10	2.41
7	Google +	35	8.43

(Note: Multiple responses were permitted)

Twitter and orkut were next in the line of popularity. The number of social networking sites used by the adolescents also varied, 47 %(app.) used only one type of social networking site, 27%(app.) used two only and 26%(app.) used more than 2 types of social networking sites.

4. The amount of time spent by adolescents on online social networking was expressed in terms of frequency of use, time spent per session, duration of using social networking sites and daytime spent on these sites.
- a.) Adolescent's responses towards the question how often they visit Social networking sites is depicted in Table 3

Table3: Frequency of use of social networking websites (N=415)

S.No.	Level of frequent use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Daily	243	58.55
2	3 to 5 times in a week	97	23.38
3	Once or twice in a week	60	14.46
4	Fortnightly	12	2.89
5	Less often	3	0.72
	TOTAL	415	100

Table 3 shows that a good number (58.55 %) of the studied adolescents visited social networking sites daily while 23.38% were visiting 3 or 4 times in a week.

- b.) Time spent by these adolescents per online session is given in table 4

Table 4: Time spent on social networking sites per session (N=415)

S.No.	Time spent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 30 minutes	104	25.06

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2	30 minutes-60 minutes	142	34.22
3	1hr-1.5hrs	61	14.70
4	1.5hrs-2hrs	58	13.98
5	More than 2hrs	50	12.04
	Total	415	100

It was revealed from table 4 that 34.22 % of adolescents were spending 30-60 minutes per online session on these sites and 25.06% were spending less than 30 minutes per session. But it is to be noted here that about 12.04% of adolescents were spending more than 2 hrs per session which may account for addiction among them.

- c.) For how long duration these adolescents were using social networking sites is as important consideration as of the frequency of use of these sites and time spent per session. Duration of using these social sites is specified in Table 5

Table 5: Duration of using social networking websites (N=415)

S.No.	Duration of use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Less than a month	33	7.95
2	1 Month- 6 Months	80	19.28
3	6Months-12 Months	103	24.82
4	1year-2years	136	32.77
5	More than 2 years	63	15.18
	Total	415	100

It was found that most of the adolescents (32.77 %) were using these sites for last 1-2 years

- d.) At which time in a day the adolescents access these sites is also a significant aspect and related results are shown in Table 6

Table 6 Day time spent on social networking sites (N=415)

S.No.	Day Time	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Morning hrs	15	3.61
2	Afternoon hrs	77	18.55
3	Evening hrs	257	61.93
4	Late night hrs	134	32.29

(Note: Multiple responses were permitted)

- 5.) Purpose of using social networking sites is also an important facet of this analytic study. Table 7 represents the frequency of adolescent's responses for different purposes.

Table 7 Purposes of using social networking sites (N=415)

S.No	Purposes	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Time Pass	320	77.29
2	Entertainment	334	80.48

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3	Educational	251	60.48
4	Social	342	82.42
5	Just for publicity	107	25.78

(Note: Multiple responses were permitted)

It shows that a majority of the adolescents used social networking sites for social purposes like to stay in touch with friends, online wishes & invitations, participation in social issues etc (82.42%) and entertainment (80.48%) purposes like chatting, sending scraps, uploading photos and videos etc. A good number (77.29%) of the students used these sites for just time pass where as 60.48 % used for educational purposes like to get an update about recent happenings around that can be useful for educational purposes, academic discussions etc.

6.) The adolescents were asked to indicate their parents' reaction towards their social networking sites usage as shown in table 8.

Table 8 : Parents Reaction Towards Social Networking Sites(SNWs) Usage (N=415)

S.No.	Parents Reaction	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Do not know about SNWs	30	7.23
2	Do not permit me	56	13.49
3	Do not permit me for longer period of time	229	55.18
4	No problem with my SNWs usage	89	21.45
5	Encourage me to use SNWs	11	2.65
	TOTAL	415	100

Parents of most of the adolescents (55.18 %) do not permitted them to use social networking sites for longer period while 21.45 % parents had no problem with usage of social networking sites by their adolescents.

7.) The adolescents were asked to indicate the sources from where they get information about social networking sites and their responses are shown in table 9.

Table 9: First source of information(N=415)

S.No.	First source of information	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Friends	313	75.42
2	Teacher	0	0
3	Family member	37	8.92
4	Internet	42	10.12
5	Television	12	2.89
6	Newspaper	11	2.65

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Table 9 shows that a majority (75.42%) of the adolescents got first information about social networking sites from their friends only.

8.) The non user adolescents were asked to indicate the reasons for not being a member of any of the social networking websites (table 10)

Table 10 Reason for not using Social Networking Sites (N=185)

S.No.	Reason for not using Social Networking sites	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	I am not aware of these sites	30	16.21
2	I don't get time to access these sites	59	31.89
3	It is not interesting for me	29	15.67
4	I think it's just a waste of time	82	44.32
5	I do not know how to access internet	10	5.41
6	I do not have an easy access to internet	18	9.73
7	I think these sites are not safe from security and privacy points	19	10.27
8	I prefer more personnel channels of communications (like letter, e mail)	14	7.57

(Note: Multiple responses were permitted)

Most of the Non user adolescent (44.32%) thought its just a waste of time to access these sites and 31.89% of adolescents do not get time to access these sites. 16.21% of adolescents were even not aware about the social networking sites.

9.) It was found that about 7% of studied adolescents were addicted to social networking websites.

Conclusion:

The present analytic study revealed the ever growing popularity of social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, Orkut and Google plus among adolescents. Adolescents are using these sites mostly for entertainment and social purposes .It is really a matter of concern that adolescents are spending significant amount of time on these sites and are prone to get addicted. So there is a need of both formal and non formal education for adolescents, on the decorous use of Social Networking Websites. Educators can use these sites to connect with the school going adolescents in innovative and constructive ways.

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