SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING AMONG B-SCHOOL STUDENTS: ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES, USE, FULFILMENT AND IMPACT

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Abstract:

Social networking sites are ubiquitous and superfluous on the internet, attracting heterogeneity of users including, young, middle and the old equally. These sites retain an ever-increasing user base capturing the time and involvement of the users, leading to a puzzling question – What do these people do in social media network? This research revolves around such question attempting to explore attitudes towards SNS, use of SNS, Fulfillment from using SNS and finally, the impact of SNS on academics. Around 174 post graduate students pursuing management education from a premier B-school in Hyderabad city, responded to a structured questionnaire consisting of scales to assess their attitude towards and the use of SNS. The results are quite interesting as there is a positive attitude towards SNS, but the intensity is not much felt, Fulfillment from using SNS is varied. Surprisingly, the impact on Academics is not very encouraging, as viewed by the respondents. Implications are drawn for SNS promotion, user's optimization and academic administration.

Introduction

As we look around at today's youth and the way their lives are, what seems to be more utopia a few decades back are no longer a fantasy. The word 'iGeneration' is evolved from the Apple lineup of popular products which exploded in the market for the younger generation, specifically the iPod music device and more recently, the iPhone (Wittaker, 2010). The iGeneration also represents a change in not only methods but attitudes and values also. The iGeneration may be considered socialites by which technology became the means of isolated socialization – allowing access to friends, colleagues and family's social lives from the comfort of desk or laptop (Wittaker, 2010).

These people and the technology which changed their lives are inseparable. They carry using their technologically advanced gadgets always while moving, being in bed, in the classroom, at the workplace and quite likely in anything else they do. They listen, watch, read, text, chat, post, sell, Search, purchase, review, and advocate of the brand, and so on with their gadgets. With such obsessive involvement with their gadgets in information technology, one may wonder whether the present iGeneration is effective in personal, familial and professional space. With 97,885,011 users by 2019, India beat the China (50,666,155) and US (25,379,895)

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in internet growth ranking, by January 2019. As regards social media use, china stands first with 95,325,000 users followed by

India with 60,000,000 mark, says a report released by Hootsuite (2019).

Table 1: Global Mobile, Internet, and Social Media Use

Total Population	Unique Mobile users	Internet Users	Active social Media users	Mobile social Media users
7.676	5.112	4.388	3.484	3.256
Urbanisation(56%)	Penetration (67%)	Penetration (57%)	Penetration (45%)	Penetration(42%)

While Indians, primarily use the internet for communication, largely in the form of email, social media is also an important driver of internet use in India. With the entry of JIO, internet has become a force to be reckoned with. This indicates that today's generation is intensely involved in using internet technologies on all the devices that can be connected to the internet, sharing information with wider constituents of users.

In fact, young generation is either ignorant or might not have operated desktops and they graduated to smartphone. What made this generation embrace such technological advancement, particularly web-based technologies and the gadgets that connect them to the internet for social networking, and so on?

This question is quite puzzling to the business houses, new product development teams, marketing professionals on the one hand, and of course to the faculty members in the schools and colleges. On the other hand, who are constantly evolving new methods of teaching to uphold the interest and attention of the students in the classroom. Encouraged by such thought and passionate to find an answer this study is conducted and the research reported in this paper is a portion of the major study

exploring psychological dynamics of internet usage by iGeneration today.

The Present Study
Social network sites can be defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Cheung & Vogel, 2011). These sites are the most favored ones for all kinds of people called generation.

User-generated content sites lay the platform for sharing information in the form of videos, photos, music, documents, besides blogging. According to Nielsen/NetRatings, user-generated content (UGC) sites constitute 5 out of the top 10 fastest growing Web brands (Neilsen 2006). Interestingly, the role and of social networking sites (SNS) is undeniably ubiquitous and overwhelming, especially among teens and young adults; more than 55% of teens online use social networks, and 48% of them visit SNS daily or more (Lenhart and Madden 2007). Nevertheless, there is still a paucity of research in this area, particularly to understand the attitudes and usage of SNS (Wellman and Gulia 1999).

Social networking sites are growing by leaps and bounds, creating the most successful brands, providing a 24/7 platform for individuals and businesses, to leverage on such platforms for realizing personal and business goals. While recent research on social networking sites has focused on user characteristics, very few studies have examined their roles in engaging people in the democratic process. Though SNS is also for networking the revolution in the Islamic block, the present study is beyond such confines. Table 1 shows the most popular SNS with their usage and ranking.

Table 1: SNS, Their Usage and Ranking

Social Media Platform	Users	Rank
Facebook	2,271	1
Youtube	1,900	2
Whatsapp	1,500	3
Fb messenger	1,300	4
Weixin / wechat	1,083	5
Instagram	1,000	6
QQ	803	7
Qzone	531	8
Douyin / tiktok	500	9
Sina weibo	446	10
Twitter	326	11
Reddit	330	12
Douban	320	13
Linkedin**	303	14
Baidu tieba*	300	15
Skype*	300	16
Snapchat**	287	17
Viber*	260	18
Pinterest	250	19
Line	194	20

Source: Hootsuite (2019)

A closer look at the table mentioned above indicates that with 2,271million users and ever increasing in its user base, Facebook is undisputed and indomitable of all social networking sites. Followed by Youtube, Whatsapp, FB messenger. The remaining of them with their individual share of the user base, are far behind the Facebook YouTube, WhatsApp usage, but growing slowly and steadily. Interestingly, in India, 300 million accesses Facebook through mobiles alone, and access through other digital devices is phenomenally increasing (Hootsuite, 2019). However, why do these Indians like SNS? What do on it and how much time do they spend on SNS. Surprisingly, there seems a lack of research on all such issues, and it is the need of the hour to understand all such nuances using the scientific method. Thus, the present study is twofold in its purpose. Firstly, it attempts at understanding the attitude users towards SNS and how much of time do they spend and for what purpose

do they spend on SNS. Lastly, implications are drawn for IT business and academicians.

The Method
Out of 150 active SNS users, 64 of them responded to an online survey posted to them, with 42 percent of response rate. This survey included a structured questionnaire containing standardized scales intend to measure Attitude towards SNS, SNS intensity, Reasons for using SNS, Academic purpose, SNS as an educational tool. Details of these scales are presented in table 2. All the scales used are highly reliable.

Table 2: Scale Details

Sno	Scale	No of Item	Alpha
1	Attitude towards SNS	9	.69
2	SNS intensity	6	.87
3	Reasons for using SNS	5	.59
4	Academic purposes	5	.50
5	SNS as an educational tool	4	.50

Results and Discussions
While understanding the result of the study, firstly, the attitude towards social networking sites is accessed and presented to understand the attractiveness of SNS as a precursor to the study of users' engagement on SNS, particularly, the SNS. Followed by attempting to understand the intensity of usage of SNS, reasons for using it, any academic purpose do they fulfilled in it and lastly, could SNS be an educational tool? All such issues are addressed in the following sections.

Table 3: Attitude towards SNS

Sn	Attitudes	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Percentage
1	I am comfortable using social media.	174	4.13	.78	78.28
2	Social media is easy to use.	174	4.23	.76	80.74
3	I use social media regularly.	174	3.92	1.07	72.95
4	Social media lets me communicate quickly.	174	4.30	.74	82.38
5	Social media helps me stay in touch with things that are important to me.	174	3.90	.96	72.54
6	Social media wastes a lot of time.	174	3.66	1.01	66.39
7	Social media is a productive use of my time.	174	3.03	.86	50.82
8	Social media is relevant to my life.	174	3.17	.91	54.17
9	I check at least one social media site every day.	174	4.13	1.13	78.33

As we observe table 3, it is quite glaring to note that users attitude towards use of social networking sites is quite positive and encouraging since on all the nine indicators

of their attitude towards use of SNS have been above average, particularly, comfortably, ease of use, frequency of use, instant communication, updating and periodicity of usage have all been exceeded more than 60 percent, indicating that the users have a very positive and very cardinal attitude towards use of social networking sites. We further wanted to know how are they on using SNS since it is the top-rated SNS. Results in this are presented in the following table.

Table 4: SNS intensity

Sn	SNS Intensity	N	Mean	SD	Percentage
1	SNS is part of my everyday activity	174	3.15	1.54	53.81
2	I am proud to tell people I'm on SNS	174	2.85	1.31	46.25
3	SNS has become part of my daily routine	174	2.98	1.40	49.57
4	I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto SNS for a while	174	2.31	1.25	32.63
5	I feel I am part of the SNS community	174	2.97	1.29	49.17
6	I would be sorry if SNS shut down	174	2.55	1.31	38.75

As regards the intensity of use of SNS by the respondents, it is surprising to note from the table that the respondents have not given very encouraging scores as evident from their mean scores which are below 3.0, indicating that the use of SNS is not internalizing to them. For instance, it is not an integral part of them as it is not much proud to be part of SNS. Similarly, it is not part of daily routine, and not seriously missing out on anything if not logged into it. Besides, they will not be sorry if SNS shuts down.

Table 5: Reasons for using SNS

Sn	Reasons	N	Mean	SD	Percentage
1	I use social media to interact with my friends.	174	4.08	1.09	77.12
2	I use social media for my academic work.	174	3.70	.85	67.50
3	I use social media to increase professional opportunities.	174	3.57	.96	64.34
4	I use social media to make new friends.	174	3.05	1.41	51.23
5	I use social media for coordinating group projects in my classes.	174	3.73	1.10	68.33

One may wonder what could be the reasons for which SNS is used today. When asked, the respondents are of the view that most of them use it for interacting with friends, followed by reasons like academic work, professional opportunities and for coordinating with group projects in their class work. Interestingly, interacting with friends has been 77 percent as opined by the users of SNS. If so, is there any academic purpose is fulfilled while using SNS. To such question, their responses are quite

interesting, which are presented in the following table.

Table 6: Academic purpose

Sn	Academic Purpose	N	Mean	SD	Percentage
1	I am SNS "friends" with at least one of my professors.	174	3.67	1.40	66.80
2	I would not "friend" a professor. --	174	2.19	1.22	29.66
3	I monitor my privacy settings in SNS.	174	4.12	1.08	77.97
4	I would be worried that if I visited or posted on a class SNS page, my professor would see my private postings intended for my friends only.	174	2.73	1.16	43.33
5	I think SNS is overused.	174	3.75	1.13	68.75

It is quite interesting to note that the users have a particular academic purpose in using SNS. Or instance, they have their professors as friends on their SNS, besides, for monitoring their privacy settings, it is not much encouraging for having professors as friends on SNS, and they don't like to have their professor reaching their posting's on SNS. This suggests that SNS may not be seen as an encouraging interface between students and professors in its current form. How does it help in other educational pursuits? The results in this regard are presented in the following table.

Table 7: SNS as an educational tool

Sno	SNS as Educational Tool	N	Mean	SD	Percentage
1	I wish more professors used SNS in their classes.	174	2.37	1.28	34.17
2	I think SNS is a good way to disseminate information.	174	3.44	1.05	61.02
3	I would post to a SNS page connected to a class.	174	3.43	1.26	60.78
4	I would visit a SNS page set up by a professor.	174	3.63	1.22	65.83

When asked how SNS could be used as an educational tool, the respondents are of the view that they would visit SNS if a page is set up by a professor. Besides, they feel that it could be a good way to disseminate information using SNS. Surprisingly, they do not wish more professors using SNS in their classes, indicating that SNS is more for social networking and not for professional networking, wanting it for more building informal relationships.

As this study addressed certain crucial issues pertaining to the use of social networking sites in general and SNS in particular, there could be a myriad of implications for the businessmen and also for the academicians. For businesspeople, it does serve a purpose for promoting their products and services, but for academicians, it is with a bit of caution, that this media may not be exclusively used for educational purposes as the users from this study feel that they do not like to use it more for educational purposes. Therefore, the limited by the use of SNS by faculty members may be left to their own judgments.

Conclusion

Social networking, beyond doubt, the most popular online services in the world today. What made this popular SNS is no more a surprise social media is mostly enabling users to share information with each other" It has no boundaries for any kind of people around the world to use it, thus, classifying them as the iGeneration. This study explores the attitudes towards social networking sites, the use of SNS, the intensity of use, the reasons for using it, and could that be an educational tool for the users. All these issues have been addressed in this study.

This study highlighted some interesting findings that no wonder social networking sites are quite likely the order of the day and SNS in particular is a more social and informal networking sites, which may not be of exclusively used for educational purpose, leaving a huge gap for future research on how to make it useful for educational purposes if at all there is a need. In fact, the younger generation is using Whatsapp as a learning and information tool in schools and colleges. Therefore, incorporating such technologies in school and higher education is the need of the hour.

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