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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PERCEPTION OF YOUTHS TOWARDS SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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Abstract:

Social Networking Sites (SNS) is a phenomenon today. It has changed the lives of million of people around us. Youths are the actual core engine of this phenomenon. Marketers have further added to its growth by translating it into financial success. However few of the SNS have transcended beyond the periphery of marketing gambit and have become culture and communities where youth live online and offline in the real time. One such site is facebook which is the VICTORINOX of virtual society. Such platforms are used for uncountable no of reasons that probably cannot be quantified. The paper explores the usage patterns of SNS among youth. Authors conclude that face book is a phenomenon and students are perpetuating it. Heavy users tend to rely heavily for seeking education related problems. Students of technical courses use SNS to help each other in studies as well as in employment. Networking is the key to sustain speed and success in the examination irrespective of gender and course.

KEYWORDS:

Social Networking, Youth, Media .

INTRODUCTION:

Economy of ICT companies is pivoted on the thumb of the youths. Thumb generation has been increasingly using mobile phones and tablets to access the social networking sites from anywhere and anytime. Millions of macro and micro communities are formed with the passing of each day. With so many media and so much content available, it is not surprising that young people devote much of their time to media.(Donald2008)

Among youth today, the popular communication forms include e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, chat rooms, bulletin boards, blogs, social networking utilities such as MySpace and Facebook, video sharing such as YouTube, photo sharing such as Flickr, massively multiplayer online computer games such as World of Warcraft, and virtual worlds such as Second Life and Teen Second Life.(Kaveri,2008). Social networking is based on the idea that society exists as a structured set of relationships between people (Toomey et al. 1998).

SOCIAL MEDIA: A PHENOMENON

Marketers are beginning to understand the use of social media as a component in their marketing strategies and campaigns to reach out to customers. Promotions, marketing intelligence, sentiment research, public relations, marketing communications, and product and Bcustomer management are sub-disciplines of marketing that may use social media (Tanuri 2010).Technocrats and entrepreneurs are

reaping the harvest of this phenomenon by luring the users to open the accounts with their SNS. However few of the SNS have transcended beyond the periphery of marketing gambit and have become culture and communities where youth live online and offline in the real time. One such site is facebook which is the VICTORINOX of virtual society. Such platforms are used for uncountable no of reasons that probably cannot be quantified. There are cases where a woman is rescued by the assault on her just because she used facebook in time or the story of a kidnapped kid who found his family after 22 years with help from Facebook(Murano 2009). This study illustrates that once at university, Facebook becomes part of the' social glue' that helped students settle into university life (Julia2009).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH

Teens use instant messaging mainly to communicate with offline friends (Elisheva,2004). Likewise they use social networking sites to keep in contact with their peers from their offline lives, both to make plans with friends whom they see often and to keep in touch with friends whom they see rarely(Amanda2007). They use blogs to share details of everyday happenings in their life (Kaveri2007). Youths today like to update their status on SNS in real time.

The authors show that adolescents are using these communication tools primarily to reinforce existing relationships, both with friends and romantic partners. More and more they are integrating these tools into their "offline" worlds, using, for example, social networking sites to get more information about new entrants into their offline world.(Kaveri,2008). Some teachers view the social networking sites as an avenue to enhance instruction.

High school teacher Alyssa Trzeszkowski-Giesecl aims that her profile on Facebook has allowed her to establish deeper relationship with and understandings of her students because she can communicate with them beyond t he four walls of the classroom.(Alyssa 2007). On the other hand communities have viewed what they consider to be inappropriate information on an increasing number of teachers' social networks paces, judgments have been made, and a range of consequences have been experienced. No matter how significant the outcome, these cases create lasting opinions about individuals and affect the entire profession(Heather2008). Marginalized people who are unable to express their needs and identities in the so-called real world, such as gay youth in homophobic rural contexts, can share interests and experiences in interactive discussion forums (chat rooms), forming classic "communities without propinquities," spaces of shared interest without physical proximity(Barney1997). Facebook usage was found to interact with measures of psychological well-being, suggesting that it might be beneficial to students experiencing low self-esteem and low life satisfaction. Analysis of the results suggests a strong association between the intensity of Facebook use and perceived bridging, bonding and maintained social capital. (Kevin2011)

Social networking sites are also susceptible to crime especially for sex offenders. Vast majority of online sex offenders are adults who contact vulnerable 13- to 17-year-olds and seduce them into sexual relationships, however use of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook did not increase their likelihood of being contacted by a sex offender. Instead, adult offenders primarily use instant messages, e-mail, and chat rooms to meet and develop intimate relation ships with adolescent victims,(Bruce2008)

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA SCENE

The shifting terrain of media consumption is connected to a palette of factors, including the evolution of new media technologies, wider public access to the internet, the globalization of information flows and the growing popularity of 'citizen journalism' (Anderson 2006; Gillmor 2005; Lasica 2003). Gross observations of today's media environment are particularly telling in that no single medium is becoming extinct, yet new media are being added.(Jay2008). The increasing mixity between 'old' and 'new' media – both at the level of production and consumption – blurs the boundaries between 'citizen' and 'professional' journalism. (Gabe2010).

Blogs have broken a small number of big news stories and raised opinions on significant issues, but the significance of the stories and opinions were felt only after the mainstream news media followed them up.(Joyce2006). New media technologies clearly alter both the moment of public engagement and the quality of information transfer. In this regard, if we consider some of the most iconic news events of recent times – 9/11, 7/7, the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina and the Mumbai attacks – three observations stand out. Firstly, formative images of global risk incidents are invariably recorded by members of the public close to the epicenters, using mobile phones and digital camcorders, as opposed to professional journalists (Anderson 2006, 115; Lee 2007).

SNS have a wider role to be played in the society. This role has to be over and above the interests of the marketers who eye the enormous amount of data pertaining to the users of SNS. How Facebook utilizes interoperability as a way to achieve market dominance and user dependency, while enforcing norms of sharing that does not maintain contextual integrity and collapse public and private distinctions that establish a power imbalance between Facebook, its partners, and its users. Given recent revelations that Facebook's third-party developers have been selling UIDs to advertisers, a critical overhaul is needed in how Facebook interoperates with third-party developers and advertisers. (Robert Bodle 2011)

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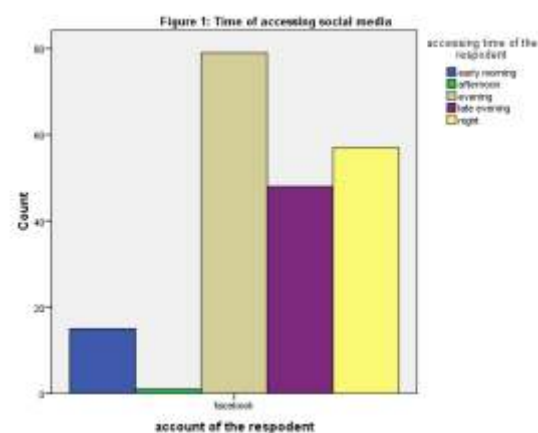
OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study was to identify the association between: (1) parental acceptance of the youths to have online profile and time of accessing the social networking sites, (2) education and employment opportunities explored by youths on SNS, (3) frequency of accessing SNS by the youths and role of SNS in tackling education related problems, (4), consent of the parents of the youths to have online profile and opinion of university girls about SNS as platform to share their problems.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out on the students of Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology which is presently running thirty-five courses. The present study is an attempt to quantify the pattern of usage of SNS among the university post graduate students of MBA, MSc, MTech, and MCA. Students of different courses of Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology were taken as universe and two hundred students were taken as sample. Multistage sampling method was used to select the courses from the universe in the first stage. In the second stage data was collected through close ended questionnaire from all the students of the selected courses who were present on the day of data collection. Cross tabulation and chi-square statistics were used to explain and find association between the different variables.

ANALYSIS

Researcher has taken two age groups. First group consist of students in the age bracket of 19-22, and in the second group students in the age group of 23-25. there were 21 %(42) students in the first age group and 79%(158) students in the age group two. Eighty four percent (169) of the students have their mail account on gmail whereas 16%(31) of the students use yahoo for emailing. All the users of gmail have facebook account whereas none of the user of yahoo has account on facebook. On further probing no specific reasons were revealed for this trend. Students of all section starts operating their facebook accounts in the evening and continue till late night(figure1). Nearly one-fourth(49) of the respondents frequently remain online till late night whereas 19%(37) operate their account till late evening.

Figure 1: Time of accessing social media

There is a significant association between parental acceptance to have online profile and time of accessing the social networking sites (Sig .000, df 4, Chi-Sq calculated 1.318). Fifty nine percent (117) of the students have the acceptance of their parents to go online during late evening and even late night but 31%(63) of the parents don't allow their children to do social networking during evenings and early morning(8%). This indicates two trends. Parents have accepted facebook phenomenon and they have given enough rope to their children to use this new medium but on at the same time parents do not permit them to use social networking during play time(evenings) or prayer time (early morning). More than two-third of the respondents(116) whose parents does not object being online post text as well as photographs on their social networking account. This association is highly significant (Sig .000, df 4, Chi-Sq calculated 51.739). More the freedom students gets from the parents the more expressional he/she gets in their SNS profile. Further exploring the trends researchers found that the respondents make frequent postings of text and photographs regarding political issues 43%(86), social issues47%(96) and employment related issues 77%(153). In the significant association (Sig .00, df 9, Chi-Sq calculated 34.511) it was found that Three-fifth(19/32) of MBA students, two-third (30/45) MCA students, three-fourth (44/58) of MTech and MSc students (50/65)   agreed that SNS does help in getting employment opportunities but significantly associated (Sig .002, df 3, Chi-Sq calculated 15.055) gender difference exist regarding perception about role of SNS in solving employment problem. Twenty-five percent (50) males and nearly double the females (47 %(93)) agreed that SNS is capable of solving the problem unemployment from the country. The skepticism among the males is may be due to the fact employment related information may or may not be posted in the honest intentions whereas female believe that such information are posted with honest intentions.

Figure 2: Crosstabulation between Frequency of Accessing SNS and Solving
Educational related Problems
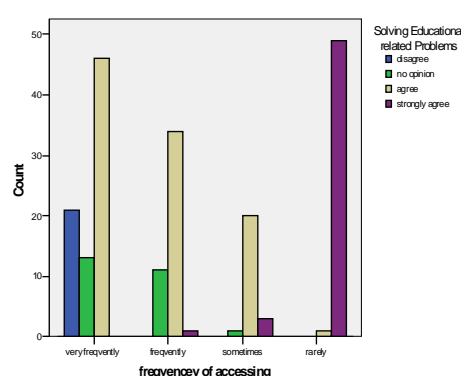
Twenty three percent(43) of the students who frequently access SNS believed that people on SNS helps them to tackle education related problems. The association is significantly associated(Sig .000 df 9, Chi-Sq calculated 2.087). However on the other 25% (49) of the students who rarely asscess SNS were of the opinion that SNS never help them solving educational related problem. It implies that frequency of access is directly proportional to the faith of the students in SNS in providing solution to educational related problems. this mean that some students who are not frequent SNS persons don't want others to know that what kind of problem they are passing through because that might affect their image amongst their friends on the SNS. In similar significant association (Sig .000 df 12) 27%(53)of the students who are very active facebooker were of the opinion that SNS does improve their self image. Students have included SNS as their status as well as latest communication style. However 23%(42) of the girls who frequently remain online disagreed that SNS can offer the solutions to the problems related to girls in comparison to the 39%(78) girls who spend same amount of time of SNS but believed that SNS is a good platform to find solution to their problems (Sig .000 df 12, Chi-Sq calculated 87.904). Again in a significant association (Sig .000 df 9, Chi-Sq calculated 2.113) sixty two percent(123) of the frequent onliners students trusted SNS to initiate a revolution. Online communities are very closely knitted communities based on honesty and trust. Good and bad cases travel at lightening speed. Success is multiplied and failure is deleted. As a result it is success stories that create spiral of belief. In the recent past countries witnessing total revolution inflated the SNS with confidence that degree of trust among the heavy user had gained phenomenally especially among young generation.

Girls see SNS as a safe zone to share their problems. In a significant association (Sig .003 df 4, Chi-Sq calculated 15.749) between consent of the parents to have online profile and opinion of girls about

SNS as platform to share their problems. Nearly 25% (49) of the girls whose parents have consented to have online profile does not believe that the SNS are a honest platform to share their problems on the contrary 65% (130) of the girls irrespective of consent of their parents have strong faith in SNS and rate it high to share problems related to them. Girls have adopted SNS as virtual friend. Active posting on SNS provides social security to girls. Facebook provide them company when a girl needs it most at any hour of the day. She can rely and coordinate her programmes with her virtual friends. The unique features of SNS help her mix virtual as well real world together

CONCLUSION

Dependency of parents on new information social order has gained currency due to heavy pressure of studies and competition amongst children. Facebook and Skype often provide respite to the parents whose children have gone far away to study or work. These are cost effective websites and provide real-time interactions which provide instant gratification to both the parties. Gradually parents who were opposing it now find it useful even in the older age. However parents still believe in the old saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" and that's why they do no prefer their children going online during pay or prayer time.

Due to the convergence of communication channels it has now become easier to hip-hop from print media or electronic media to social media for the same matrix of information via SNS. Almost all the information will have a direct link to the SNS. This link is highly useful especially to the students who have developed their profile and online image. Normally students provide the link of their online address in the CV also so that prospective employer can get more information about him. When both of them will meet probably they will be more acquainted with each-other. This sincerity is one of the reasons that students rate SNS as an important platform to launch themselves in their respective field before they are in the field itself. It is established fact that face book is a phenomenon and students are perpetuating it. SNS is an open platform where everybody can share their content with eachother. Heavy users tend to rely heavily for seeking education related problems. Students of technical courses use SNS to help eachother in studies as well as in employment. Networking is the key to sustain speed and success in the examination irrespective of gender and course.

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