

Social Media – Challenges to Girls - An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

New media technology offers bigger chance for affiliation and community and at a similar time poses social challenges for girls and young women. Powerful new technologies give nice advantages, however they additionally amend the approach we tend to live, and not invariably in ways in which everybody likes. An example is that the unfold of air-con, that makes North American country more well-off, however people who grew up before its invention speak lovingly of a time once everybody sat on the porch and talked to their neighbors instead of going inside to remain cool and watch TV.

The declining price of knowledge process and communication represents a strong new technology, with social networking because the most up-to-date service to be provided at modest price. It has brought major pluses and minuses. Social media provides us a platform to express ourselves without any restrictions which is becoming a major challenge as it may infringe the fundamental rights of privacy of a human being. The paper attempts to sketch a very broad overview of the challenges of Social Media. The observations made in it are based on research through questionnaire, which had been given to 200 girl respondents in MGM College Udupi

Key words:-Social Media, Awareness, Challenges and Girl Students

INTRODUCTION

New developments in the technological world have made the internet an innovative way for individuals and families to communicate. Social media networks have created a phenomenon on the internet that has gained popularity over the last decade. People use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Hike messenger to create and sustain relationships with others. These social media sites let those who use them create personal profiles, while connecting with other users of the sites. Users can upload photographs, post what they are doing at any given time, and send personal or public messages to whomever they choose. In

this “information age,” social media sites seem to be growing in popularity rapidly, especially among young adults. In particular, college students form a large proportion of users on social media networks. Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr (2010) found in their research that 72% of all college students have a social media profile with 45% of college students using a social media site at least once a day. Many of these young adults use social media networks to communicate with family, friends, and even strangers. Social media sites have created new and non-personal ways for people to interact with others and young adults have taken advantage of this technological trend. The purpose of this study was to examine how social media affects college student’s communication with others and their awareness of safety in that horizon.

Significance of Study

This field of study is important because sociability is an underlying theme in using forms of social media. Since this social media phenomenon is continuing to grow at a fast pace, it is important to understand the effects it has on personal communication. Social media networks offer a straightforward way to converse with peers and get peer feedback, as well, which may influence a young adult’s self-esteem. Facebook makes it simpler to communicate with multiple people at one time. Social media may also make it easier for users to monitor activities of people they have not seen in a while as well as reconnecting with new and old friends.

Theoretical Framework

Erikson’s theory of human development combined with Arnett’s theory of emerging adulthood provides the theoretical framework of this study. Erikson described late adolescence as a time where there are many prospects of love, work, and worldwide views.

Emerging adulthood, which is described as ages 18-25, is a combination of the late adolescence and early adulthood stages previously identified. It is a time where individuals are trying to find a sense of self worth while exploring possibilities of love, work, and world views. Identity formation occurs during emerging adulthood as young adults are figuring out who they are as a person. Since this is a time of exploration and change, individuals may seek peer feedback to help foster their self- identity. Social media allows an outlet for identity exploration to occur through peer feedback and strengthening of relationships.

The purpose of the study was to examine social media use among college students and how it affects communication with others, and college students' self-concept.

Research objectives

1. To find the extent of usage of social media among college students
2. To find the relationship between extent of usage of social media and communication with family and friends.
3. To find the extent of their awareness of challenges to their personal safety for girls in social media

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

All the studies reviewed for this review of literature used samples whose participants were college undergraduate students. College students' use of social media is happening in rapidly growing amounts as new technology becomes available. Computer-mediated communication allows young adults to interact over social media with family and friends. Few studies have been conducted to examine how using social media and other computer-mediated communication affects communication skills (Baker & Oswald, 2010). Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as public web-based services that allow users to develop a personal profile, identify other users ("friends") with whom they have a connection, read and react to postings made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly. Individuals may choose to send private messages, write on other user's walls, organize social activities, and keep informed about other user's daily activities. However, users can limit themselves on what information they would like to share publicly with others. Some items they may choose to include are: pictures, favorite books and movies, birthday, relationship status, and location (Tufekci, 2008). Baym, Zhang, and Lin (2004) studied social interactions of college students across all media. Their results indicated that 64% still prefer face-to-face interaction, 18.4% prefer the telephone, and only 16.1% prefer the internet for making social contacts. The internet interactions reported showed that e-mail was by far the most dominant form of contact, followed by chat and instant-messaging (Baym et al., 2004). Of the 51 participants in the study, 49 reported conducting their social life contacts through at least two, and often three, methods on any given day (Baym et al., 2004). Similarly, one study reported that over 27% of young adults used a social networking site every day in 2009 (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Social network sites help fulfill communication needs and wants. It is a convenient method of communication and provides the ability to stay connected with friends and family, but on the users own rate and time (Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). Users can manage their interactions within their own

schedule by choosing when they want to read and respond. The internet communication is a solitary activity usually done alone. However, it is efficient because it is a one-to-many method of communication that allows users to quickly spread information.

Research Methodology

The 'Social Media and Girl Students Questionnaire' was used to collect data. The written questionnaire was created by the principal researchers with some questions. Questions in the survey included the following areas: demographics, extent of usage of social media, awareness of privacy settings. The questions on the instrument were designed to satisfy the research questions as set forth in the introduction of this study. Therefore, the questionnaire was considered to have content validity. The convenient sampling was used for the survey.

Findings

The questionnaire was administered to girl students of the MGM College Udupi. The 200 respondents belonged to the age group 18, 19 and 20 years. The respondents were broadly classified on the basis of their age and then studied collectively. Thus we have presented the data and inference with reference to these three age groups.

Questionnaire contains many questions which were formulated to derive the answer for the major questions. Following is the findings of the three major questions addressed in this research.

Extent of Usage of social media among girl students

The following questions were asked to derive a finding on the extent of usage of social media among girl students- 1. Which of these social media networking accounts do you have? 2. Which social networking profile do you update most often? 3. How often do you visit social networking sites? 4. How often do you spend time "lurking" on social networking sites? 5. How often do you post status updates? An analysis of responses led to the following findings:-

In the 200 responses from girl students of the age 18, around 80% of them possessed access to at least one social media networking account. And all of them who had access, spent time daily once at least on such networks. But it was noted in common that 90% of the 200 girls very rarely updated their status on these media networks.

In the 200 responses from girl students of the age 19, around 80% of them possessed access to at least one social media networking account. It was also seen that 100 students had access to more than one media and the rest had access to either Facebook or WhatsApp. 80 of them

who had access, spent time once in a week at least on such networks but others spent time daily. 18 girls very rarely updated their status on these media networks while 2 of them updated on a regular basis daily.

In the 200 responses from girl students of the age 20 around 80% of them possessed access to at least one social media networking account. 12 of them who had access, spent time daily once at least on such networks but others very rarely spent time on such accounts. But it was noted in common that 90% of the 20 girls very rarely updated their status on these media networks.

Extent of usage for communication with friends and family

The following questions were asked to derive a finding on Extent of usage of media for communication with friends and family- 1. Why do you use social networking sites? 2. What do you share in these sites? 3. In what ways do you communicate with friends and family on social networking websites? 4. Has using social networking websites made keeping in contact with friends and family easier? 5. Does using social networking websites help you communicate with people face-to-face better? 6. Do you prefer using social networking websites over face-to-face communication?

On an analysis of responses for the above questions, the following findings were derived-

In the 200 responses from girl students of the age 18 it was found that all of them used the networking media to keep in touch with old friends and distant relatives. They majorly shared personal details and social viewpoints. But none of them preferred social networks over face to face communication. They neither felt that the use of those social media helped them to communicate better with people face to face. These findings were similar in case of the girls belonging to age of 19 and 20 too.

Extent of awareness of challenges for personal safety

The following questions were asked to derive a finding on the extent of awareness of challenges for personal safety among girl students – 1. How much secured you are when you use these sites? 2. In what ways do you communicate with friends and family on social networking websites? 3. Have you used social networking sites to impress other users? 4. Does your communication with other users on social networking sites positively or negatively affect your self-esteem? 5. How many internet “friends” do you have on social networking websites whom you personally know and how many of them do you only virtually know?

On an analysis of responses for the above questions, the following findings were derived-

In the 180 responses from girl students of the age 18, 90% of the respondents were careful about the privacy settings while only 20 students felt secured on the casual usage. All of them either used private messages or groups to communicate with friends and family. None of them used social networking sites to impress other users. None of them even felt that their communication with other users on social networking sites would positively or negatively affect their self-esteem. These findings were similar in case of the girls belonging to age of 19 and 20 too. On the analysis of the number of internet friends whom the girls personally or virtually knew, it was noted that very few of them (precisely two) had few friends whom they only virtually knew.

CONCLUSION

The present research suggests that social networking websites like Facebook , WhatsApp and Hike messenger have emerged as the most popular social medias and have continued to grow in popularity. Social networking websites also offer new and innovative ways to communicate with other individuals in a quick manner. Individuals are getting access to social media through communication gadgets like mobiles at increasing rates and visiting them quite frequently. Through this study we have arrived at a inference that girl students have access to social media and they do spend time lurking on such networks. But it is also to be noted that the present generation is quiet aware of the challenges to their safety and hence are very careful in handling their accounts in such networks. This study makes an important contribution in understanding college students' use of social media, its effect to communication and their awareness about safety issues.

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Journal of Technology Research, Use of social media, Use of social media by college students: Relationship to communication and self-concept by Megan Sponcil, Youngstown State University
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