

Effects of Social Media on the Behaviors and Social Interactions of Pakistani Youth

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Abstract

This research evaluates and indicates the issues with social networking usage and its impact on the social behavior and social interaction of youth. In this research, for getting an in-depth understanding of behavior and social interaction of youth by social media, qualitative research method through quantitative analysis is used. The research concludes that with the advent of computer technologies, world has been entered in an era of technologically rich period of time special with the wide use of social media and internet technological devices. The users of the internet are mostly college going youth of the community in Pakistan. These users are fully aware of the dangers of these technologies. They are cautious of using social media. They know how to curb the pros and cons of the social networking sites. Eventually social media is been beneficiary along rational use of it amongst youth of Pakistan.

Introduction

Internet entertains people in several ways. Invention of YouTube and face book has opened a new phase. There are many advantages of internet in many ways as building new relationships and connecting with old and lost friends. This feature of internet attracts many people. Along with all them, it has also brought some of the behavioral changes in youth in different ways. Along with behavioral changes, it also changes the approaches of youth towards social life. Social life of youth is changing differently. Many people are fearful about this change as it is changing the social values of society. Department of Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) operates and made the system of internet which is an emergency communication. High speed of internet also brought a revolution in the field broadcast. It gives an in-depth coverage of making newspaper; it became the best source for news and information about weather. The emergence of electric mail is the most important source of transferring information. Many people use internet at home school and work places just for sending and receiving the emails. It is the fastest way of communication and may be the easier one. The most popular activity on internet is chatting. Through chatting people talk with their friend from different part of the world. With the introduction of video calling it enhanced the interest of the users.

Internet introduced the websites. These are social online networking sites. People make their public and semipublic profiles to connect with people and friends. They can work in group and relating to same work can search for appropriate section of work of their demand. Social networking web sites facilitate communication. Member of such sites can easily form groups. Though these sites serve in good ways, but it has also negative effects which has major threats to the users of internet.

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Early social networking websites are Classmates.com and SixDegree.com. The Classmate.com focused on the relations with former school friends. SixDegree.com focused on indirect ties. In these sites any one could create profile, send message to friends in list and others and people with similar interests could be found from their profiles. These two websites were major sources of entertainment. These two website got much popularity especially among youth. But later, these sites were shut down because these were not profitable. The owners of websites claimed and described that these websites were non profitable, so, they closed them. In 1999, two different social networking models came. One of them was trust base, developed by Epinions.com. Second was friendship base, developed by Jonathan Bishop and used on some UK's regional sites from 1999 to 2001.

In 2005, the popular social networking service "My Space" became much popular among the people. My space got more pages viewed even more than Google. After it a major competitor came in market named with Face book. A rapidly growing site and with short span of time became much popular among youth. In 2007, Facebook got too much popularity. Seeing it Facebook started allowing a well developed add-on application. Some applications enabled social network users for graphing, so, linked social networks and social networking. In 2004 Google launched the Orkut. It is a search engine that is very popular in some countries as India, USA, and Brazil etc.

Various social networking sites started working in different languages focusing specific audience from specific areas. According to estimation, there are round about 200 different social networking sites exist and emerging social networking models.

There are number of reasons and feature that attract people towards social networking sites. The main among them is instant message from long distance. You can send and receive message from any part of world to any other part of globe. Another is scrapping. There are options of privacy which allow you to maintain your account and only visible to friends you want. Contrary to email and quick messages it is not a personal communication. Youth mostly use these sites to be socialized and satisfy their socialization needs. Youth try to participate in changing scenario of communication. They also get information and try to be aware of surroundings and about their friends.

In profile setting, which is a way to control your account, users can show their identity to specific people whom they want. Users have many options in this way. It is a way of showing the profile user's identity to people and making themselves to be perceived by the profile viewers. Users have different option like sharing a photo and control over it as who can see the photo and who cannot see it. User can define it by specifying specific person who can watch it while other cannot. Social networking sites allow users with such type of privacy setting to avoid any inconvenience to users.

Literature Review

Online socialization through networks like Face book is more beneficial to the development of adolescents than they are harmful or dangerous. Many internet safety and parenting experts suggest that parents prohibit their teens from social networking sites and other online spaces where predators may lurk banning adolescents from social networking sites if this were even feasible as well as monitoring too closely might close off avenues for beneficial cognitive and psychosocial development that are available to young people in the online social world (Tynes 2007).

There is a difference in participation of gender on social networking sites. Younger girls are less participatory than those of younger boys who actively participate in social network. In contrary, the older girls are much more likely to participate in social networking than those of older boys. Older boys mostly use social networking sites to flirt. They are slightly more likely to want make new friends than those of girls of their age. On other hand, older girls' main

priority is to communicate with their friends. These girls mostly use these networking sites to be informed about the social life (Boyd 2007).

In both genders, girls are more curious about the kind of comment they receive from their friends and people. It is usually very important for girls that the liking and comments come from people they know or from friends, rather than strangers. This indicates that photo comments are not just about having ones outer looks valued and acknowledged (identity construction), but also about practicing and maintaining Friendships (Larsen 2009).

From the last six years, internet has bloomed as genuine phenomena to communicate in society. Online social networking profiles posted by adolescents contain intimate, candid, and observable self-disclosure and peer interaction that can be analyzed creating an overall picture of adolescent behavior, highlighting specific areas needing additional research and addressing implications for parental monitoring and intervention (Madden 2007).

The focus of policy attention and Media coverage is mainly on how youth and children use social network sites and for what purpose they use it. Adults use more social networking sites. In US, adults are a large portion of users who use social networking sites. About 65% of teen use online social networks. Younger online adults use more social networks than their older counterparts. At its core, use of online social networks is still a phenomenon of the young (Lenhart 2009).

Timeline create individual creativity and emphasis maintaining of personal authors through social media. It allows rest of the people to comment of certainly creating their own content as well (William 2008).

In 2003, according to ratings it was found that for quick messaging service, teens usually visit icon sites. OriginalIcon.com and BluntTruth were most famous sites. Both of these sites offer social networking tools. It was also found that older generation also used these two sites to some extents. It was found that more than half of the visitors to famous site MySpace were people of age 35 and above. This was a good thing for marketers. E-commerce system is becoming famous in people, no matter of different ages. According to a report, traditional media is losing its attention after the emergence of social media. In social media, people can enjoy many facilities they can shop online and social networking sites have more discretionary income. That is a host of potential customers just waiting to be tapped into (Knight 2006).

The youth spending on data services represents almost 50 percent of all mobile spending in most mature markets. Not only are youth the early adopters of most new technologies, they are also among the more sophisticated users of it as well (Subrahmanyam 2006). Livingstone (2005) drew a new phrase called "Reverse Socialization". Researchers concluded that the socialization of family life is converting in opposite side. Young children are more informative and knowledgeable than their parents about these technologies. It was also suggested that the interaction of young children with these technologies is occupying much space and time in their lives. There are several questions which need answers. First, what do teens do in communication sites such as chat rooms and blogs? What they talk and discuss? Secondly, are these communication sites are effecting and changing the behavior of teens? And what are the relations between teen virtual worlds and real worlds? Are teens are leaving behind the real life while connecting to online world?

Methodology

Research approach

The research evaluates and indicates the issues with social networking usage and its impact on the social behavior and social interaction of youth. In this research, for getting an in-depth understanding of behavior and social interaction of youth by social media, qualitative research method through quantitative analysis is used.

Sampling method

In this study researcher selected the students from different colleges and schools of Islamabad which is also the capital of Pakistan to investigate the problem. The size of sample was 100. Sample was then selected randomly from different schools and colleges. Data was collected from students' from 17 years to 22 year old, who were active users of social media.

Research methods

In this research survey method was used to collect data from sample. The reason behind selecting the sample of this age was that in this age, mostly students' use social media. They are mostly early adopter of new technologies. Through questionnaire, data was collected. Questionnaires were distributed to sample.

Data analysis and interpretations

Table: 1 – Reason of using Internet

Uses	Percentage (N=100)
Mail	21
Surfing	19
Chatting	20
Social Networking	34
Others	6
Total	100

The prime objective of youth for using Internet is for mailing and internet surfing 21% and 19% respectively. A large number of people are using internet in their daily routine life. In Pakistan, people are using internet on a large scale. 34% people use internet only for objective of social networking sites while 20% of the internet users use internet for purpose of chatting. Rests of the responses are downloading content reading books online and some responses were about online shopping.

Table: 2 - Membership of social networking sites

Are you member of SNS	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	89
No	11
Total	100

Amongst sample, 89% people have member ship of social networking sites. This indicates the hegemonic power of social sites in making them as status quo amongst Pakistani youth. Furthermore, split data shows that 55% users are member of facebook and 25 % are on twitter whereas rest of the sites mentioned by users are friendstar, linkedin, Ning, Tagged, Netlog, ebuddy and myspace.

The users of these networking sites are classified as those having membership of one site and those member of more than one networking sites. About 30% respondents were user of more than one social networking site. This shows the popularity of social media among the youth of Pakistan.

Table: 3 – Usage of social networking sites in hours

Hours	Percentage (N=100)
Less than 1 hr	42
1-2hrs	48
3-5hrs	10
7-8 hrs	0
Total	100

Amongst internet users, 42% respondents are users of internet less than 1 hour whereas 48% users are using internet for 1 to 2 hours. Respondents between 3 to 5 hours are comparatively low whereas respondents were nil between 7 to 8 hours. Majority of the sample were showing that reason for shorter duration of using internet for shorter period of time is due to several reasons such as having no interest in using social media. Secondly there is no internet connection at the hostels where students live or no internet connection at home.

Table: 4 – Incentives for membership in social networking sites

Reason to register in SNS	Percentage (N=100)
To retain older friends	19
Find new friends	42
For networking of business	3
Partners for activity	8
Dating	2
Others	16
Total	100

Amongst young users of internet, (24yrs), 19% says that they use social networking sites to sustain existing relationships whereas 42% using this media to finding new friends. With 2% of figure uses social networking sites for dating. The major portion of users use social media for retaining existing friend while on other hand a short number of accounts holders are using for purpose of dating. 12% of the users use these sites for the purpose of business.

Table: 5 –On which criterion you make friends

Criteria for making friends in SNS	Percentage (N=100)
Education or Business purpose	20
Personal likeness	44
Just for chat	20
Other	16
Total	100

There are certain reasons on part of users to choose online friends to cat or contact with on social networking sites. 44 % users believe on their own choice to come in contact with stranger. Their decision to choose online friends is not based on any logical grounds. Business and education needs inspire 20% to come in contact with peers group or friends. 22% of respondents use social media to maintain existing contacts among family and friends. From result it is clear that youth give priority to their personal preferences and likeness in these sites. It is the most devastating social behavior which is expressed among the age of 17 to 22 yrs.

Table: 6 - Activities in social networking sites

Features	Percentage (N=100)
Timeline setting	18
Communities	14
Sharing pictures	19
Scraps	5
Friends network	16
Easy access of others profile	19
Testament	7
Other	2
Total	100

Access to others timeline and testaments or preferences of viewing the timeline of other users are comparatively low. It shows that security and privacy concerns are paramount for the users. Many of the users of social networking sites do not use social media in fear of security and privacy.

Table: 7 – Do you try to establish personality features in SNS

Establishing Identity	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	52
No	48
Total	100

A large group of social community on social networking sites tries to establish their identity features. These figures are 52 %. At the same time 48% users are not interested in such activity on social sites.

Table: 8 - Relationship with online friends

Relationship with online friends	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	67
No	33
Total	100

67% of the respondents were in the view that they have online friend, other than their actual life, in the social networking sites. 44% of the sampling users have given a pessimistic point of view. Only 33% of the respondents have given the response that use social networking media for making new friends. 67% of the users have come out personally positive to this query.

Table: 9- Interact with online friends through personal chats

Chatting with online friends	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	38
No	62
Total	100

Personal chats are very private of all the users. Statistics of the survey indicates that 38% respondents' uses social networking sites for chatting while 62% have negative response

to this question. The topics of chat between online friends are about daily routine life, movie displayed at cinema or theatre, food habits, going out etc.

Table: 10 - Preferable topics for discussion with your online friends

Topics of discussion	Percentage (N=100)
Personal problems	10
Just chatting	55
Social discussion	25
Other	10
Total	100

Only 10% of the online interactions share their personal problems with each other and for Chatting a social discussions 55% and 25% respectively. These figures indicate the level of intimacy between online friends on social media.

Table: 11 – Rate your relationship with online friends

Relationship with online friends	Percentage
Very intimate	7
good friends	20
fairly	18
average	25
None of above	30
Total	100

7% online users of social networking sites have very intense relationship with each other while 20% have just good relations. Fair and average relations are 18% are 25% respectively.

Table: 12 – Your Friends with opposite gender

More opposite gender friends	Percentage (N=100)
Real life	30
Social networking	70
Total	100

In real life, 30% respondents showed that they have good relations with opposite gender while 70% have good relations with opposite gender on social media. There is certain fear which puts hindrance in making opposite gender friends in real life. These are introvert personality, nearness, fear to communicate. Social media has made it possible technological advancements and a medium to communicate with anonymity had given a positive forum to have relations with opposite gender through social media.

Table: 13 - Friendship contacts with people of different cultural backgrounds

Friendship with different cultural background	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	40
No	60
Total	100

40% respondents youth have friendships with people belongs to other classes of society than their own. They have interaction with other racial groups of society to share opinion news views and social problems whereas 60% of the social networking users are not having relations with other classes of society.

Table: 14 - Social interaction and social networking sites

Effect of social networking sites	Percentage (N=100)
Members of the household spend more face-to-face time together.	14
Spent less face to face time together	20
Spent about the same amount of face to face time together	48
Others	18
Total	100

Percentage of social members spending same amount of time together as on social media is 48% while 14% send their most of the time together rather on social media. The amount of time between members of social media who spend less time together rather equal or more is 20%.

Findings

About 92% respondents were having the opinion that social networking sites is a source to connect with old friends, retaining already developed relationships or share of knowledge and opinions. The note able responses in care of social media were: A large number of Pakistani youth is using social networking sites. More of the users are member of more than on social networking sites. But they do not use this media frequently. The use of internet is downloading for most of the time. The note able responses in care of social media were:

- It is good with certain positives notes but at the same time a lot of negativity exists within that.
- It is to maintain already developed contacts
- It is favorable in retaining friends
- It is an feasible way to keep in touch with the entire social media member
- It's good to find school friend at later stages of life
- It is the best source of connectivity with rest of the world
- It's a leisure time activity.
- It is good for proliferating our ideas with other people and our friends
- It is totally a wasteful activity.
- If it used positively, this medium is very good.
- It is positive thing if it does not affect the privacy of others.
- It enhances our friends circle
- It has pros and cons like every medium. It keeps us in touch with old friends but at the same time no privacy here as everyone can see our profile
- We should maintain our privacy to get out of scam or negativity.
- It's a source of finding new business venues controlled.
- 19% respondents favor online sharing of pictures through social networking sites.
- 52% users establish personality features through timeline displays on social media.
- 67% respondents retain relations with online friends.
- 38% respondents made their relations on strong grounds that they have their interactions on other than one messenger or network.
- Only 10% views shows in survey that people share their problems with online intimate relations.

- 7% respondents were having very good relations with the peers of online media.
- 40% of users of social networking sites use online media to create friendship in diverse cultures and communities
- 48% social media member spends their same amount of time together as on social sites.

For each and every technology, there are some certain pros and cons-positive and negative comments. The same rule is applied for social media. If this medium provides us opportunity for making friends or retaining existing contact, it also has some dark side. Sometimes it spoil our privacy concerns and we never know how we been exploited in name of friends. The only way to save ourselves from scamming is to remember that we need to be safe while contacting others. The study reveals that users are fully aware of the underlying threats to privacy. This is the positive behavior and gesture by the respondents who is well known of the pros and cons of social networking sites.

Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to shed lights on the evolution and hegemony of social media upon users of social networking sites and also to get to know the behavior of internet users of social networking sites in age of youth. The researches done previously in this area of social networking sites are also a helpful material and provides base for this study.

With the advent of computer technologies, world has been entered in an era of technologically rich period of time special with the wide use if social media and internet technological devices. The users of the internet are mostly college going youth of the community in Pakistan. These users are fully aware of the dangers of these technologies. They are cautious of using social media. They know how to curb the pros and cons of the social networking sites. Eventually social media is been beneficiary along rational use of it amongst youth of Pakistan.

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