A Study on the Use of Social Networking Sites among the Youth and Their Family

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Abstract: *The use of networking sites among the people of India is evidently increasing, particularly among the college students. It has invariably left a big impact on society in general and college students in particular. Now social media is an integral part of adolescents and it is the major form of electronic communication. However, this article describes about how the social networking sites influence the youth and their - family relationships.*

Objectives of the study are to explore the impact of social networking sites among youth and how these sites affect the family relationship of the youth as well as to check the negative and positive impact of SNS usage. Methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative research design with descriptive and case study method. A total number, of 30 samples were collected for screening and 10 samples were taken for case study. Here 2 cases were discussed.

Results and discussion shows that the usage of SNS has pretentious interpersonal relationships between these students and their family members. Large number of respondents (63.3%) agreed that SNS has affected their personal and interpersonal relationships. This study clearly pointed out that the personal life and social life of the youth is affected by the use of SNS.

Key Words: *Youth, Social Networking Sites (SNS), Family, Relationship.*

Introduction

The use of networking sites among the people of India is evidently increasing, particularly among the Indian college students. It has invariably left a big impact on society in general and college students in particular. Many Social Networking Site developers like Whatsapp, Hike, Wechat, Line, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and others are competing to give the best

features in terms of socialization, interaction, privacy and even entertainment. This study describes about how the social networking sites influence the youth and their - family relationships.

Today's youth are being influenced massively by new and powerful resources. Social Media has flourished in the age of the Internet. It offers a way to keep in touch with new and old friends, network, follow brands and companies and offers a mini biography of each user's life. The adoption of the mobile phone by young people has been a global phenomenon in recent years. It is now an integral part of adolescents' daily lives and is for the majority, the most popular form of electronic communication. In fact, the mobile phone has turned from a technological tool to a social tool. Young people use the mobile phone in positive ways to organise and maintain their social networks. However, there are also negative impacts on young peoples' peer relationships. These can include ostracism and cyber bullying. Similarly, the mobile phone has led to changed dynamics in the family, with issues of safety and surveillance from a parental perspective leading to negotiated changing freedom for young people. While functional coordination can be beneficial for the family, other problems can arise such as financial difficulties, non-custodial parent access, as well as too much reliance on mobile phone for safety issues and intrusion into young peoples' lives.

Literature Review

Society is influenced by social media in myriad ways. It is the media that helps them to get information to form opinions and make judgements regarding various issues. It is the media which keeps the people updated and informed about what is happening around them and the world. The very specific objectives of the study are (1) to study the influence of other social networking sites or contributing factors on the usage of mobile phones among the respondents (2) to study the extent of the use of those mobile phones (3) to analyze the positive and negative impacts of mobile phones among the respondents (Rajeev M.M. and Jobilal 2015).

In India, at present the usage of Social Networking Sites (SNS) amongst college going students has vastly increased and the usage of SNS has extensive influence on these students in numerous ways, particularly on their interpersonal relationships (Purinatyamakanith 2014).

Even before social media websites appeared, the metaphor of young people "hanging out" in virtual spaces with their peers had been coined, and this parallel to physically "hanging out" in public spaces was drawn upon in studies of the way SNSs were taken up by youth. This work supported the argument that, part of the appeal of the online world in general, including online social media, is that there are fewer opportunities for young people to engage with each other beyond the surveillance of adults in the physical world. One of the earliest themes explored in research was that of identity play and indeed, at times, many youth have pretended to be someone they are not (usually someone older). But research suggests that this often has been done as a joke, as a means of dealing with requests for personal information, as a way of avoiding adult surveillance, or to open accounts on social network sites like Facebook when the young people are underage (i.e., under 13 years old). In practice it seems that most youth have contact online, especially via SNS, with peers whom they already know offline, or who are at least friends of friends, developing "friendship-driven practices" online (Boyd, 2010). In this context they tend to post profiles with real details about their lives (i.e., name, interests, what they are doing) (Leslie Haddon 2015).

Social-networking sites have taken the world by a storm leading to nothing less than a revolution. A lot of concerns have been voiced about social networking sites taking over in our lives. However, one major issue that has been overlooked is the changing mind-set of the youth due to the social networking sites. The adolescence years shape our outlook, our personality and mould us into what we are. So when we grow up in a world where our popularity is directly proportional to the number of "likes" and the "haaawt" comments we get on our Photoshop-enhanced profile picture and live with people constantly competing for the coveted title of the king/queen of the virtual world, it is bound to have a profound impact of the psyche of an entire generation. The focus and time we spend on creating our brand on these social networking sites is a standing testimony to the awakening of the narcissist in us.

Online social media have gained astounding worldwide growth and popularity which has led to attracting attention from variety of researchers globally. Although with time all generations have come to embrace the changes social network has brought about, teenagers and young adults are the most fanatic users of these sites. According to various research studies in the field of

online social networks, it has been revealed that these sites are impacting the lives of the youth greatly. When using these sites such as Twitter, Facebook or My Space, there are both positive and negative effects on the youth.

Positive Impacts

It is inevitable to ignore the fact that nowadays social network plays an essential role in teenagers' lives. Most youths are spending at least an hour in these popular social media sites. Generally, 1 out of 7 minutes which are spent online by most of those who can access internet is spent on Facebook according to Shea Bennett. One may ask how spending all that time on the social media sites may have a positive impact on them. Well, social media helps the youth and any other user updated with what is happening around the world, help the teenagers stay connected and interact with each other even if they are many miles apart. This strengthens their relationship even if they finished school and moved to different locations they stay connected and update one another. In addition, social media sites have provided a platform whereby the youth can create groups and pages based on their common discipline and end up building connections and opportunities for their respective careers by updating various topics to discuss. Youth who have been interviewed they say that social media has become their lifestyle and it makes their lives easier and efficient.

Negative Impacts

While on one hand social network sites seem to bring people together and connected, on the other hand it creates social isolation with regard to BBC News report. As the youth tend to spend many hours on these sites, they rarely have face-to-face interaction. According various studies, scientists' evaluation determined that social isolation can lead to a host of emotional, psychological, physical and mental problems which include anxiety, depression and somatic complaints among many others. Other negative effects of social networking that various people suggested included encouraging poor spelling and grammar, exposing underage to online predators, allowing spread of misinformation that is perceived as fact, decreasing productivity as those who are supposed to be working spend time in the sites to chat, provide a perfect platform for cyber bullying and providing details that increase risks of identity theft.

Methodology

This paper is based on the study of the use of Social Networking Sites among the youth and their family relationships.

The aim of the study is to find out the impacts of social networking sites among youth in their family relationships. The Research Design used is Quantitative (descriptive method) and Qualitative research design (case study method) is used for this study. The present study consists of the students from different colleges in Dakshina Kannada district.

Case Study among the Youth

Case Study 1

Jithin [mock name] was a 20 year old boy. He has born in a Christian lower class family. His father was a cooli worker and mother was a home maker. He has one elder sister doing P G studies at an autonomous college, Mangalore.

Three years before he started to use the social networking sites. In the beginning he was going to internet cafe and was using Mail, Facebook, Twitter etc. When he joined for MSW he bought a new smart phone by stealing cash from his father's pocket. Before buying mobile phone, he was spending nearly one hour in internet cafe by using social networking sites. And he had more leisure time with his friends and his family. He could concentrate in his studies and had an open talk with everyone. After buying mobile, slowly he had reduced the number of his friends. Most of the time he engages himself in using Facebook and Whatsapp. Even he is not ready to talk with his family members.

He was using internet nearly 7 hours per day. After getting mobile he couldn't concentrate on his studies. He could not eat food at proper time. He was sleeping at late night, so he lost his sleep. Before buying mobile he was participating in all the extracurricular activities like sports, arts etc. But now he is not interested to participate in any extracurricular activities. He started to use internet to make a relationship because his parents were always fighting with one another. So he is not ready to do any family matters, he just wanted to escape from family through social networking sites.

He told that, in his view social networking sites were useful to make the social people to socialise; every person is having at least one account on social network sites. It is a good platform for sharing information, updating our status. We can communicate with people who are away from us. Sharing views will make the person more knowledgeable. Coming to advantages, as we are living in a busy world it helps to be in touch with relatives, friends etc. Business persons can promote their product by using these social networking sites. Coming to disadvantage, accessing it in wrong way and it's use totally depends on person's attitude and way of thinking. There was a time when children used to play physically; they used to go to playgrounds to play with their friends. But today the scenario has changed. Today children are more into social network or PC games than playing physically. So, they are more into a virtual world than the real world. Today's teenagers spend more time in chatting with strangers over social network than chatting with their relatives. And this is not only limited to children and teenagers; even some adults too are getting addicted to social network. This has affected their mental health drastically. Students are scoring less because of lack of motivation that is caused by excessive use of social network. Even suites have found that social network addiction affects the genes and weakens the immune and hormone level.

The respondent was using internet nearly 7 hours per day. The loss of interest in daily activities including extracurricular activities led him to the extent of addiction. It indeed disrupted his personal life. The disrupted family relationship and poor involvement in social function clearly indicates that the use of social networking sites affected his social life. The decreased social relationship eventually made him aloner and exhibited withdrawal behaviour possibly similar to a person with schizoid personality disorder. The respondent was aware about his problem but he couldn't resolve it. The researcher suggested to the respondent that, to make a time schedule for each activities and reduce the level of the addiction of social networking sites. This boy needs positive motivation to overcome this problem. It could do by available service of psychiatric social worker or a professional counsellor service either in the education institution or outside.

Case Study-2

Anu [mock name] was a 23 year old girl. She was born in a middle class family. She belongs to Hindu religion. Her father was a farmer; her mother was a home maker. She has two elder brothers and 3 elder sisters and one younger sister. She is last one in her family. She is doing final year B.Com. at a private college in Puttur. She was good at both studies and extracurricular activities.

Since 2010 she started to use social media because her father gave her a mobile phone for academic purposes. At the beginning one of her friends helped her in using social networking sites after that she started to spend a lot of time in social net working sites. She likes to make friends in social networking sites. And through chatting, she is trying to get happiness. Now in a day, she is using different social networking sites like facebook, Line, Twitter, WhatsApp and other social networking sites. She also has more interest in watching videos on these sites. Most of her friends are using different social networking sites. That led her to use different social networking sites. She is using social media more than 10 hours per day.

Because of the excessive use of social networking sites her sleep is disturbed. Before using social media she was good at studies but now she cannot concentrate more on studies because her interest towards study has decreased. She lost interest in reading books like novels, stories and news papers. Her participation in other activities like, functions within the family, festivals everything decreased because she lost all the interest. Now she is not ready to interact with family members and her friends. Her life changed fully because of social networking sites. Through the social networking sites she was maintaining the relationship with her friends but, the direct interaction was reduced. She uploads pictures and useful information in these sites. She was spending the leisure time in chatting, video calling etc. She said that, she didn't like to involve in family matters but decreased direct communication with her parents and siblings. If anyone tries to talk with her, she would get angry.

She told that Social networking site play an important role in the life of youth. Social media is one where group or individuals communicate over an internet. Best example of SNS is Facebook; it is a vast network where we are connected to our friends, relatives, colleges etc. It helps us to be in touch

with our loved ones. By SNS people get connected to the world and we will have information within a second. It helps to search jobs, share information among others. We even can make a group and page of like minded people and share ones thoughts etc. We even can get connected to Mr Narendra Modi, our respected Prime Minister and we can directly share our problems with him. There are so many Politicians; Film actors to whom we can get connected easily through Social Media. Like positive points, Social Media has negative points too. One will waste lots of time spending on Facebook. By recent research it came to be known that 10 out of 7 use facebook, it's just a waste of spending lots of time on Facebook. It has left to us how we make use of Social Media; it has both negative and positive aspects.

We can have a good interaction, we can update our knowledge, we can get lots of friends and we can interact with different levels of people. On uploading works (e.g. Pics or any useful information) and if we get many likes or someone shares it then there incurs inexpressive happiness. We can get many notifications e.g. If we forget our friend's birthday it shows notification through which we can remember and thus a good relationship is maintained. The students get highly addicted towards it and results in a way that there cannot be a day without social network for them. One can use social networks and it is not restricted. But if our usage is limited then it would be great advantage. Definitely it is left with individual. We can allow any sort of trends to follow with us but not too much.

Most of the people get benefit from social media. Like they can easily know about the international news, get the updates like job update from Facebook. Also social media provide e-learning platform, online training, and online job. It's depending on the youth how they use the social media in a good way or bad way and it is the responsibility of the user to be ensured security.

This respondent was using social media for more than 10 hours per day, because of that her sleep reduced, concentration on studies and other activities decreased. The loss of interest in daily activities including extracurricular activities led her to the extent of addiction. It indeed disrupted her personal life. The disrupted family relationship and poor involvement in social function clearly indicates that the use of social networking sites affected her social life. The respondent was aware about her problem but she couldn't resolve it. The researcher suggested to the

respondent that, to make a time schedule for each activities and reduce the level of the addiction of social networking sites. This girl needs positive motivation to overcome this problem. It could be done by available service of psychiatric social worker or a professional counsellor service either in the education institution or outside.

Findings and Discussion

Findings on the Influence of Use of Social Networking Sites among the Respondents

From the analysis the researcher found that,

1. Multiple usage of Internet, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Line etc. sites directly affect the respondents in performing their tasks, responsibilities, academic and social skills.
2. Social media diversifies teens' social skills, which will help them navigate through a technologically astute society.
3. This study clearly pointed out the positive ways of usage of various social networking sites which help a person gain more knowledge and social skills but the usage needs to be timely and appropriate and effective.

Findings on the Impact of Social Networking Sites on Family Relationships of the Youth

From the analysis the researcher found that,

1. Majority of the respondents do not try to maintain a good and healthy relationship with their siblings and with their parents.
2. The conflicts and lack of love and affection between the family members indicate that social networking sites affected their family life.
3. Majority of the respondents do not have a healthy relationship or interaction with their neighbours.
4. The disrupted family relationship and poor involvement in social function clearly indicates that the use of social networking sites affected their social life.
5. The direct communication between family members was suspended.

Findings on the Negative Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Youth

In considering the disadvantages, respondents identified a number of negative aspects of online social networking. This includes ;

1. Today's youth spend more time in chatting with strangers over social network than chatting with their relatives.

2. Students are scoring less because of lack of motivation that is caused by excessive use of social network.

3. The loss of interest in daily activities including extracurricular activities indicates that the students have reached to the extent of addiction. It indeed disrupted their personal life.

4. The conflicts and lack of love and affection within the family indicates that social networking sites affected their family life.

5. Their need for sleep was reduced.

6. Social networking sites can create social isolation, encourage poor spelling and grammar, expose underage to online predators, allow spread of information that is perceived as a fact, decrease your productivity, provide a perfect platform for cyber bullying and provide details that increase risks of identity theft.

7. Concern about access to personal information by others, with almost half of the youth worried that 'non friends may see their personal information'. Making unnecessary relationships with opposite gender.

8. For teenagers too much addiction to social networking sites leads to decrease in the concentration of their studies.

9. Students share the subject files during examination which amounts to malpractice.

10. Now a days we are seeing some terrorist groups using these sites to motivate the youth towards the terrorist activities.

Findings on the Positive Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Youth

From the analysis the researcher found that,

1. Our time is being stretched thinner and thinner by work and family commitments, but social networking sites offer a chance to communicate in speedy and efficient manner.

2. Social networking sites allow one person to live a life unhindered by small talk

3. In touch with the world: It isn't just your inner circle of close friends and even closer family members that social networking sites allow one person to communicate easily and effectively. Also social media provide e-learning platform, online training, and online job.

4. You can be updated with what is happening around the world, stay connected and interact with one another, strengthens your relationship with one another, update one another and create groups and pages based on your common discipline which ends up in building connection and opportunities for your respective career by updating various topics to discuss.

5. It is useful for a student to share assignments. It helps a lot for education where students can refer data from e-books, articles, presentations etc.

6. It creates a virtual platform to meet with near and dear ones through Video Conferencing, Skype, Video Chatting and various other modes.

7. The people who use it badly are faulty. If you are given stones then you can make bridge out of these and you can also make a wall out of these. It entirely depends on individuals how to use it.

8. The first recognizable social networking site is Six-degrees which were launched in 1997.

   Till now, there are more than 200 social networking sites in the internet. Facebook, launched in 2004, has become the largest social networking site in the world.

Suggestions

1. The present study was conducted among a sample of 30 respondents. For more accuracy, a larger sample can be considered for future studies.

2. Give positive motivation to the youth to overcome this problem.

3. Educate the parents about the addiction of social networking sites among youth.

4. To get the service of a psychiatric social worker or a professional counsellor.

5. Limit the number of social networks you use to only those most relevant to your work and personal life.

6. If you really don't know someone well or at all, don't feel obligated to befriend or follow them.

7. Use lists and filters. Sometimes there are pressing reasons for being connected to someone (i.e., not unfriending them), though you might want a temporary way to filter for a specific group of people without permanently "hiding" the status updates of other people. Both Twitter and Facebook offer friend list features that, if implemented properly, let you quickly view the status updates of a specific group of people. This way, you can view just the updates that are most relevant to you at any given moment. So if you associate certain roles or tasks with each list (business, personal, friends, friends + acquaintances, digital-only friends, etc.), it'll be easier to filter for the updates you want to see.

8. Use a schedule. Schedule your use of social media. Unless there's an overwhelming reason otherwise, don't leave Facebook or other social media sites open in a web browser tab all the time. The same goes for desktop Twitter or Facebook clients such as Tweet deck, which end up being a huge distraction, especially if you follow/friend a lot of people. One way to avoid problems is to schedule your use of social networking sites in the same way that some productivity experts suggest to schedule reading of email messages.

9. Set a timer. If after trying all of the above, you still have difficulty in keeping track of time when you use social networking sites, try setting a timer of some sort, with an alarm. For a very extreme method, you can use your smart phone or an alarm clock, but if you can have the timer/alarm sound as annoying as possible (and out of reach of your arm), you'll possibly start to associate using social networking with having to get out of your chair and turn off the annoyance. This might not help everyone, but it's worth a try.

Suggestions for Safe Use of Social Networking Sites

1. Use caution when you click links that you receive in messages from your friends on your social website.

2. Know what you've posted about yourself. And don't trust that a message really is from whom it says it's from.

3. To avoid giving away e-mail addresses of your friends, do not allow social networking services to scan your e-mail address book.

4. Type the address of your social networking site directly into your browser or use your personal bookmarks. Be selective about whom you accept as a friend on a social network.

5. Choose your social network carefully. Assume that everything you put on a social networking site is permanent.

6. Be careful about installing extras on your site. Think twice before you use social networking sites at work.

7. Talk to your kids about social networking.

Conclusion

The social networking sites were influenced on young people's peer groups enabling a truly networked society. It has also impacted the evolving relationships within the family. Through the above analysis it is found that the usage of SNS affected the interpersonal relationships of college students as well as their family relationship. From the study it can be inferred that the large percentage of respondents (63.3%) agreed that the usage of social networking sites affected their family relationship..Social networking can take a lot of your time and can hold you back from engaging in other important activities such as family bonding.

In this study, Majority of the respondents have agreed that the use of social networking sites affected their family relationship. And the study clearly pointed out that the personal life and social life of the youth also affected due to the use of social networking sites. so, use the social networking sites in a proper way and maintain a good and healthy relationship with your family members.

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