



Types of social networking sites used by adolescents

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Abstract

Children are today's most profuse users of Social Networking Sites. Many of their experiences and opportunities will be shaped by their engagement with Social Networking Sites. Subsequently, questions and controversies emerge about the effects Social Networking Sites have on children's development due to how embedded their lives are in Social Networking. There are both risks and benefits to children on social and emotional development when it comes to the use of Social Networking Sites. Thus, the study was planned with an objective to study the types of Social Networking Sites preferred by adolescents. The study was conducted on 120 adolescents equally distributed over gender who were randomly selected from 2 schools of Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh. A self-structured questionnaire was administered for collecting the data. It was found that majority of the adolescents were in the age group of 15-17 years belonging to nuclear family whose parents were mostly educated. Facebook topped the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) list followed by WhatsApp which was used by adolescents. Result also reveals that major proportion of the respondents begin using social networking sites at by the age of 14-16 years.

Keywords: adolescents, communication, internet, social connection, social networking sites

1. Introduction

In the last decades of the 20th century the world in general, and India in particular witnessed a remarkable and rapid advancement of information and communication technologies. During this era "communication" emerged as the most popular term. Today the communication revolution has brought people together regardless of geographical boundaries (Manjunatha, 2013) [10]. We are living in the 21st century which is now very advancement in context of technological advancements and developments. Internet is unlimited universe of information where one can get each and everything related to his needs. Social Networking websites allow individuals to interact with one another and build relationships.

"We live between two realms: our physical environment and cyberspace." The "physical environment" represents the physical environment in which we human live. "Cyberspace" hereafter referred to as the "digital world" made up of bits & bytes and distinct due to its intangibility. It remains uncontested that these worlds are "parallel but disjointed". With the proliferation of digital technologies in our everyday lives and the increased usage of networking sites, these two realms are slowly converging into one another. We are slowly merging our physical bodies with our online selves and moving from "you are what you wear" to "you are what you post".

Today, the use of technology and online social networking has become progressively more important in the lives of young people. Social networking sites are web-based services that allow users to partake in activities such as constructing a public profile, managing other users with whom they share a

connection, and viewing the activities of others with whom they are connected (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). There are many online social networking sites commonly used by adolescents including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Google+, Vine, Kik Messenger, and WhatsApp (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011) [11] they found that more than half of adolescents access online social networking sites more than once a day.

There are seven major social networking sites. They are -

1.1 Social Connections

This result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) [7] who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

- **Facebook:** Arguably the most popular social media utility, Facebook provides a way for users to build connections and share information with people and organizations they choose to interact with online, build a professional profile, to share photos easily, free video messaging.
- **Twitter:** This site allows our views and attached with others real-time information network.
- **Google +:** This site is designed to allow users to build

circles of contacts that they are able to interact with and that is integrated with other Google products.

- **MySpace:** Though it initially began as a general social media site, MySpace has evolved to focus on social entertainment, providing a venue for social connections related to movies, music games and more.

1.2 Multimedia Sharing

Social networking makes it easy to share video and photography content online. Some of the most popular sites for multimedia sharing are -

- **YouTube:** Social media platform that allow users to share and view video content
- **Flickr:** This site provides a powerful option for managing digital photographs online, as well as for sharing them with others.

1.3 Professional

Professional social networks are designed to provide opportunities for career-related growth. Some of these types of networks provide a general forum for professionals to connect, while others are focused on specific occupations or interests. A few examples of professional social networks are listed below.

- **LinkedIn:** Online professional network where the participants have an opportunity to build relationships by making connections and joining relevant groups.
- **Classroom 2.0:** Social network specifically designed to help teachers connect, share and help each other with profession-specific matters.

1.4 Informational

Informational communities are made up of people seeking answers to everyday problems. For example, when you are thinking about starting a home improvement project or want to learn how to go green at home, you may perform a web search and discover countless blogs, websites, and forums filled with people who are looking for the same kind of information. Such informational communities include -

- **Super Green Me:** Online community where individuals interested in adopting green living practices can interact
- **Do-It-Yourself Community:** Social media resource to allow do-it-yourself enthusiasts to interact with each other

1.5 Educational

Educational networks are where many students go in order to collaborate with other students on academic projects, to conduct research for school, or to interact with professors and teachers via blogs and classroom forums. Educational social networks are becoming extremely popular with in the educational system today. Some examples of such educational social networks are listed below.

- **The Student Room:** UK-based student community featuring a moderated message board and useful resources related to school
- **The Math Forum:** A large educational network designed to connect students with an interest in math, this site provides interaction opportunities for students by age group.

- **ePALS School Blog:** This international social network for K-12 students is designed to build international connections to promote world peace.

1.6 Hobbies

One of the most popular reasons many people use the Internet is to conduct research on their favourite projects or topics of interest related to personal hobbies. When people find, a website based on their favourite hobby, they discover a whole community of people from around the world who share the same passion for those interests. This is what lies at the heart of what makes social networks work, and this is why social networks that are focused on hobbies are some of the most popular. A few examples of hobby-focused social networking sites include:

- **Oh My Bloom:** Social media site specifically for gardening enthusiasts. It features groups, forums, blogs, video content and more.
- **My Place at Scrapbook.com:** Designed specifically for scrapbooking enthusiasts, users can create profiles, share information, post updates and more.

1.7 Academic

Academic researchers who want to share their research and review results achieved by colleagues may find academic-specific social networking to be quite valuable. A few of the most popular online communities for academics are:

- **Academia.edu:** Users of this academic social network can share their own research, as well as follow research submitted by others.

Cannot Collaborative Research

Online resource for scientists, researchers and clinical practitioners to find, organize and share useful information.

The experience of childhood and youth is social, complex and quickly evolving - especially in an age of social media. Internet access for adolescents has significantly increased in recent years, yet there are major gaps in research and evidence about their activities, capacities and the risks and benefits of their online practices based on the types of networking sites they are using. With this backdrop the present study was initiated with the following objectives:

Objectives

1. To determine the socio-economic profile of the selected adolescents.
2. To explore the types of social networking sites mostly used by adolescents of Lucknow city.

2. Methodology

The respondents were randomly selected from two senior secondary schools of Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh, India. The respondents were in the age of 13-17 years equally divide over the gender. The total sample comprised of 120 adolescents. A Self-Structured socio-economic profile sheet and questionnaire was used for collecting the data. Then it was classified according to its characteristics. After collecting the data, appropriate statistical method was used to analyse the data.

3. Results & discussion

Table 1: Profile of adolescents as per socio-personal characteristics

Sr. no.	Variable	Particulars	Total (n=120)	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
1	Age	13-15 years	39 (32.5)	16 (26.7)	23 (38.3)
		15-17 years	81 (67.5)	44 (73.3)	37 (61.7)
2	Gender	Boys	60 (50.0)	60 (50.0)	60 (50.0)
		Girls	60 (50.0)	60 (50.0)	60 (50.0)
3	Birth order	1 st born	35 (29.2)	21 (35.0)	14 (23.3)
		2 nd born	55 (45.8)	25 (41.7)	30 (50.0)
		3 rd born	25 (20.8)	12 (20)	13 (21.7)
		4 th born and Above	5 (4.2)	2 (3.3)	3 (5.0)
4	Type of family	Nuclear family	72 (60.0)	34 (56.7)	38 (63.3)
		Joint family	38 (31.7)	22 (36.7)	16 (26.7)
		Extended family	6 (5.0)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)
		Single parent family	4 (3.3)	2 (3.3)	2 (3.3)
5	Maternal Education	Below matriculate	6 (5.0)	3 (5.0)	3 (5.0)
		Matriculate	11 (9.1)	5 (8.3)	6 (10)
		Intermediate	36 (29.8)	18 (30.0)	18 (30.0)
		Graduation	49 (40.5)	26 (43.3)	23 (38.3)
		Above graduation	18 (14.9)	8 (13.3)	10 (16.7)
6	Paternal Education	Below matriculate	1 (8.0)	-----	1 (1.7)
		Matriculate	2 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)
		Intermediate	21 (17.4)	9 (15)	12 (20)
		Graduation	56 (46.3)	27 (45)	29 (48.3)
		Above graduation	40 (33.1)	23 (38.3)	17 (28.3)
7	Maternal Occupation	Teaching	6 (5.0)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)
		Private services	8 (6.6)	1 (1.7)	7 (11.7)
		Govt. officer	9 (7.4)	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)
		House wife	97 (80.2)	55 (91.6)	42 (70)
8	Paternal Occupation	Farming	7 (5.8)	1 (1.7)	6 (10)
		Teaching	14 (11.6)	4 (6.7)	10 (16.7)
		Private services	42 (34.7)	20 (33.3)	22 (36.7)
		Govt. officer	32 (26.4)	21 (35)	11 (18.3)
		Engineer	25 (20.7)	14 (23.3)	11 (18.3)
9	Monthly Family Income	Below Rs 20,000	3 (2.5)	2 (3.3)	1 (1.7)
		Rs 20,000-30,000	18 (15.0)	13 (21.7)	5 (8.3)
		Rs 30,000-40,000	30 (25.0)	16 (26.7)	14 (23.3)
		Rs 40,000-50,000	26 (21.7)	10 (16.7)	16 (26.7)
		Above Rs 50,000	43 (35.8)	19 (31.7)	24 (40)

It is evident from the table that majority (67.5%) of the adolescents were in the age group of 15-17 years whereas 32.5 per cent children were in 13-15 years old. In both boys and girls, it can be observed that majority (73.3 % and 61.7 % respectively) of the respondents were in 15-17 years age group. With respect to birth order major proportion (45.8%) of the respondents were 2nd born, followed by 1st born (29.2%), 3rd born (20.8%) and 4th born and above with only 4.2 per cent. Among boys, it can be noted that major proportion (41.7 %) were 2nd born child in their family followed by 1st born child (35.0%) and 3rd born (20.0%). Only 3.3 per cent of them were 4th born and above children. Similarly, trends were seen among girls, majority (50.0%) of them were also 2nd born child, followed by 23.3 per cent 1st born and 21.7 per cent 3rd born children.

Data on type of family reveals that majority (60.0%) of the adolescents were from nuclear family, followed by Joint family (31.7%), Extended family household (5.0%). However, few of them (3.3%) were from single parent household. Data

also revealed equal proportion of boys and girls, (56.7 % and 63.3% respectively) belonged to nuclear family.

Data on maternal education reveals that mothers of 40.5 per cent respondents were graduate followed by intermediate (29.8 %), above graduate (14.9 %), matriculate (9.1) and only 5 per cent were below matriculate. Regarding gender differences in maternal education major proportion in both boys and girls (43.3% and 38.3% respectively) were Graduate. Similarly, data on paternal education shows that fathers of 46.3 per cent respondents were graduate, followed by 33.1 per cent above graduate, matriculate (17.4 %) and only 8 per cent below matriculate. In case of boys, major proportions (45.0%) of respondent's fathers were graduate followed by 38.3 per cent above graduate and none of them were below matriculate. Among girls, major proportions (48.3%) of the fathers were also graduate while 28.3 per cent were above graduate and 1.7 per cent was found to below matriculate.

Data on mother's occupation depicts that majority (80.2%) of them were housewife while only few of them are employed as

Govt. officer (7.4 %), private services (6.6%) and teaching (5.0%). It can be observed that majority (91.6 % and 70.0 % respectively) of the mothers in both boys and girls were housewife. Table further reveals that major proportion (34.7%) of respondent’s father were employed in private services followed by Govt. officer (26.4%), Engineer (20.7%), (11.6%) teaching and few of them (5.8%) farming. Among boys, in case of paternal occupation, major proportions (35.0%) of the fathers were government officer followed by 33.3 per cent working in private sector. Only 1.7 fathers of the respondents were engaged in farming. Among girls, it was found that major proportions (36.7%) of the fathers were in private sector while 10.0 per cent of them were engaged in farming.

Data pertaining to monthly family income as depicted in table 1 reveals that major proportion (35.8%) of the respondents belong to families with monthly income ranging above Rs 50, 000, and only 2.5 percent of the respondents belong to families of monthly income below Rs 20,000. 25.0 per cent of respondents belong to families with income of Rs 30,000-40,000, followed by 21.7 per cent with monthly income of Rs 40,000-50,000 and 18.0 per cent respondents from families with monthly income Rs 20,000-30,000.

Table 2: Per cent distribution of respondents as per types of Social Networking Sites mostly used by adolescents (n=120)

Most preferred SNSs	Frequency	%
Facebook	99	82.5
WhatsApp	98	81.7
Twitter	35	39.2
Skype	17	14.2
Viber	9	7.5
We chat	9	7.5
MySpace	20	16.5

Multiple responses

Data pertaining to types of Social Networking Sites mostly used by adolescents clearly depicts that facebook topped the list with 82.5 per cent of the respondents followed by WhatsApp (81.7%). Some of the adolescents (39.2%) preferred Twitter while 16.5 per cent respondents used MySpace; besides fourteen per cent adolescents preferred to use Skype while Viber and We chat were used by 7.5 per cent of adolescents respectively (Table 2).

The results are corroborated with the findings of the study conducted by Bhola & Mahakud (2014)^[3] which also revealed that Facebook topped the list with 100% usage, it was followed by Twitter with 43% and Whatsapp with 26%. Several lesser known SNS were Vonice (1% users), Indyarock, Tumbler, Minicup & Gtalk (all with 2% users each).

Khan *et al.* (2015)^[9] explores the uses of facebook among teenagers in Pakistan and it was also found that facebook is one of the favourite form of social media among teenagers. The result also reveals that among excessive users in the educational computer labs they use facebook for commenting, chatting, sharing images & videos, texting etc.

Table 3: Gender differentials as per types of Social Networking Sites mostly used by adolescents (n=120)

Most preferred SNSs	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
Facebook	42 (70.0)	57 (95.0)
WhatsApp	42 (70.0)	56 (93.3)
Twitter	5 (8.3)	30 (50.0)
Skype	3 (5.0)	14 (23.3)
Viber	2 (3.3)	7 (11.7)
WeChat	2 (3.3)	5 (8.3)
MySpace	13 (21.7)	7 (11.7)

Multiple responses

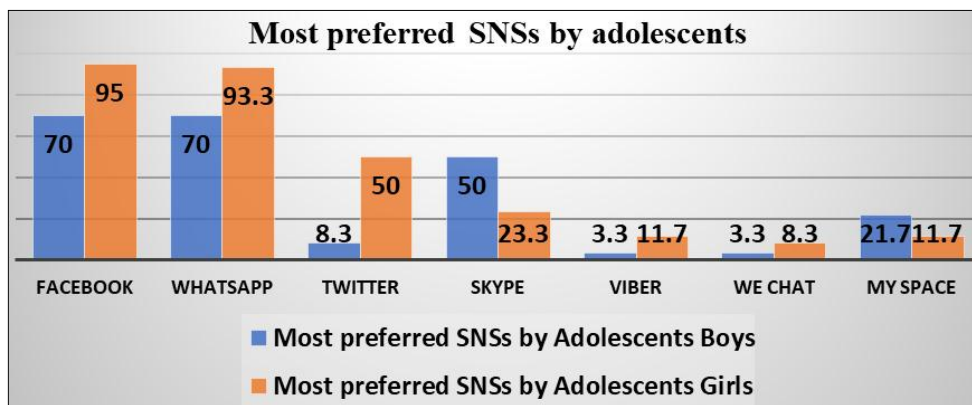


Fig 1: Gender differentials as per types of Social Networking Sites mostly used by adolescents

Data presented in Table 3 indicated that majority of the boys preferred to use Facebook (70.0%) and WhatsApp (70.0%) over other social networking sites which was followed by Myspace (21.7%), Skype (5.0%) and Viber and WeChat (3.3%) respectively. Similarly majority (95.0 %) of the girls

uses Facebook the most followed by WhatsApp (93.3%). Twitter was also found to be used by fifty per cent of the girls, while Skype was preferred to use by 23.3 per cent, Viber and MySpace by 11.7 per cent girls and only 8.3 per cent girls were using WeChat.

Table 4: Age differentials as per types of Social Networking Sites used by adolescents

Most preferred SNSs	13-15 years (n=39)	15-17 Years (n=81)
Facebook	32 (82.1)	67 (82.7)
WhatsApp	36 (92.3)	62 (76.5)
Twitter	14 (35.9)	21 (25.9)
Skype	6 (15.4)	11 (13.6)
Viber	4 (10.3)	5 (6.2)
WeChat	3 (7.7)	4 (4.9)
MySpace	8 (20.5)	12 (14.8)

Multiple responses

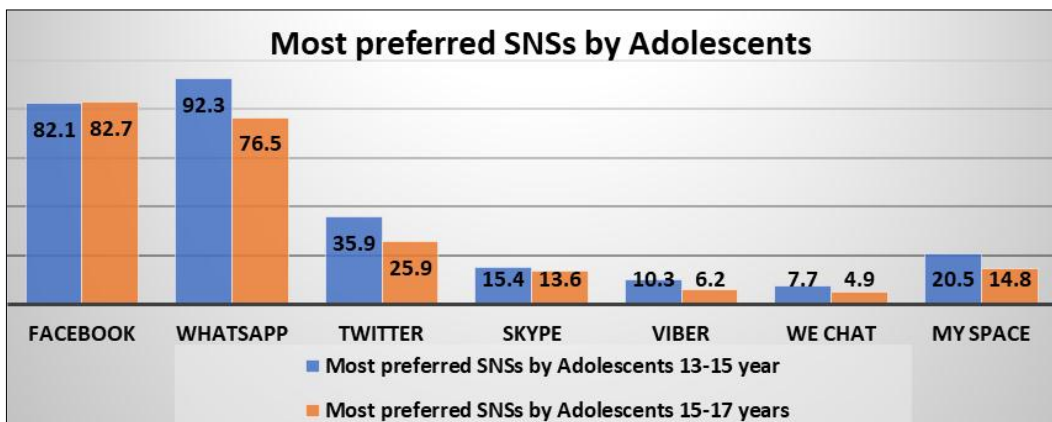


Fig 2: Age differentials as per types of Social Networking Sites used by adolescents

Further probing into the age differentials as per types of Social Networking Sites mostly used by adolescents reveals that WhatsApp (92.3%) is the type of social networking sites mostly used by 13-15 years of adolescents followed by Facebook (82.1%), Twitter (35.9 %), Myspace (20.5%), Skype (15.4 %), Viber (10.3 %) and only 7.7 per cent were found to be using WeChat. However, data pertaining to 15-17 years adolescents revealed that majority (82.7 %) of the respondents preferred to use Facebook followed by WhatsApp (76.5%), Twitter (25.9 %), Myspace (14.8 %), Skype (13.6 %), Viber (6.2 %) and 4.9 per cent WeChat (Table 4).

A similar finding was reported by Srivastava (2015) who reported that female scored highest on both scales i.e. recording higher levels of Facebook usage and happiness than their male counterparts. Older age group students were found to be more intense Facebook users than younger age group students. Older age group students were happier than younger age group students. Cabral (2011)^[5] examined Generation Y’s psychological addiction to social media with specific regard to Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and LinkedIn. The addiction was interpreted using Griffiths’ six components that determine behavioural addiction: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse. The purpose of this study was to determine if Generation Y was in fact addicted to social media because of their need to maintain relationships with their peers. The results indicated that this sample of Generation Y suffers from three components, tolerance, salience and relapse. They also suffer from intrapsychic conflict, but not interpersonal conflict. As a result, the population supports three and a half of the five tested components of behavioural addiction. The two assessments that provided negative responses, or those that fell primarily within the sometimes to never end of the Likert Scale, were

those involving interpersonal conflict and withdrawal. In order to assess these replies one must analyse the target audience and the other survey questions. Overall, the group suffered from intrapsychic conflict but disagreements among their peers were non-existent.

H₀₁ - There is no significant difference among the adolescents in the types of Social Networking Sites used by them.

Table 5: Gender differences (Mean±SD) in most preferred social networking site by adolescence

Most preferred SNSs	Boys (Mean±STD)	Girls (Mean±STD)	t	p-value
	1.81±1.15	2.94±1.31	1.28	.25

Non-significant

The data was further analyzed to find out the gender differences in social networking sites mostly preferred by adolescents. Statistically the results were found to be non-significant (Table 5).

Table 6: Gender differentials in age of starting to use Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Age of starting using SNSs	Total (n=120)	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
Below 12 years	17 (14.2)	8 (13.3)	9 (15.0)
12-14 years	42 (35.0)	17 (28.3)	25 (41.7)
14-16 years	48 (40.0)	25 (41.7)	23 (38.3)
Above 16 years	13 (10.8)	10 (16.7)	3 (5.0)

Gender differentials in age of starting to use social networking sites presented in Table 6 reveals that major proportions (40.0%) of the respondents begin to use SNSs at the age of 14-16 years, 35.0 per cent started using social networking sites

from 12-14 years while 14.2 per cent started using before 12 years and 10.8 per cent uses when they are above 16 years. It was girls who started using social networking sites earlier compared to boys. 41.7 per cent boys started using SNSs when they are in the age of 14-16 years while major proportion of girls started using when they are in the age of 12-14 years. The results of the finding is in corroboration with the findings of Bhola and Mahakud (2014)^[3] who conducted a study on a qualitative analysis of social networking usage and it was found that most youngsters begin to network socially at 14.6 years.

Jubayer (2013)^[8] examined some of the issues surrounding Bangladesh teens use of Facebook. Quantitative and qualitative data through surveys in both Bangle medium schools and English medium schools in the Dhaka area. Result reveals that half of the respondents are online and using Facebook on a fairly regular basis. It would appear that majority of the teenagers surveyed are spending a great deal of time on Facebook. Forty-six percent of the teenagers in the study indicated the time they were most likely online was between 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. Another 12 percent of the respondents indicated that, they were online from 12 a.m. to 2 a.m. which is past the time that most household members would be sleeping. The majority have responded (79 percent) that their use of Facebook does not affect their ability to complete homework. Twenty-one percent of the teenagers surveyed said that it has affected their schoolwork. There is no doubt that television, interactive video games, and the Internet can be sources of education as well as entertainment for teenagers. Too much screen time, however, can have unhealthy side effects. The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents should monitor and limit the time children spend playing games, watching television, and being on the Internet.

4. Conclusion

It could be inferred from the research findings that majority of the respondents were in the age group of 15-17 years adolescents belonging to nuclear family whose parents were educated till Graduate and mostly working in Private sector in case of father and housewives in case of mothers. Regarding types of Social Networking Sites, result clearly depicts that Facebook and WhatsApp were the most preferred social networking sites amongst adolescents. Undoubtedly, the digital age is here to stay. It will only continue to grow and expand and the younger generations will become more and more technologically sophisticated. Social networking is not a good or bad thing. With proper usage and supervision from adults, adolescents can take advantage of many great learning opportunities on the social networking as well as result in internet addiction, facebook depression, cyber-bullying etc.

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