

# Understanding Behavior Pattern of College Students Towards Social Networking Sites in India

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## Abstract

In India as well as globally, the usage of Social Networking Sites(SNS) among college students has increased significantly. Social networking has become an integral part of their lifestyle. The present study tries to explore the behavioral pattern of students towards social networking sites in India with respect to the time spent on various social networking platforms, number of friends (real or virtual) on social networking sites, kind of activities they are involved in on social networking sites and finding out the reason for hooking onto these virtual platforms. The study was conducted among undergraduate and post graduate students studying in Pune. From the sample data collected it was noticed that majority of users were having prominent presence on Facebook as compared to other social networking sites and therefore, the present study focuses on Facebook. Data collection was done with structured questionnaire and focus group interview. Analysis of the data suggests the fact that there is significant difference in behavior pattern between undergraduate & post graduate students. The reason for accessing social networking sites is not just chatting with friends but it also done for professional benefit and networking.

**Keywords:** Behavioral pattern, Facebook, social networking sites

## I. INTRODUCTION

While social networking has become mainstream in advanced economies, emerging markets are beginning to rapidly catch up as rising internet penetration and more advanced forms of online engagement are attracting new users. India and Brazil are expected to see the largest expansion in social media users globally by 2017, with the latter seeing an increase of over 10.0 million Facebook users from October 2016 to March 2017 alone, according to Social Bakers. Younger users in these countries are especially expected to drive niche platforms that focus on photo-and video-sharing, and the social media gaming sector, which often offers free content. Greater smartphone take-up, and subsequent mobile media usage could be the factors that see the developed world responsible for the bigger share of global social networking revenues in 2019 [1]. Developing countries will make up 68.0% of the world's

total number of internet users. By 2019, consumers will look more to their chosen social media brands as a one-stop shop for all their digital and entertainment media needs, providing opportunities for savvy businesses that can link and promote their goods through social networks. Global relocation of people is and will also be the reason behind the tremendous growth in SNS usage as this gives an opportunity to people to connect virtually and to maintain relationship.

Among emerging markets, India offers considerable potential in terms of digital connectivity. Over half the population in India had access to 3G networks as of 2015 with nationwide coverage expected by 2030. Rapidly growing data demand by the tech-savvy, urban youth has made wider 4G LTE rollout imminent with the government commencing spectrum auctions in July 2016. India with 119 million users, majority of them between the age group of 18-35 has huge potential in

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market, so the present study tries to explore the behavior of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards social networking sites.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social networks and their usage have experienced a massive growth in recent years, particularly, among university students [2]. Over 90% of young adults (18-25 year old) of university age are reported to have an active profile on a social networking site in the United Kingdom (Comscore, 2011). Similarly, Salaway, Caruso, and Nelson (2008) stated that social-networking sites now constitute an integral part of daily communication practices for many university students. Kaplan and Haenlein [3] classified social media into six different classes:

- ❖ Collaborative Project (Wikipedia) Blogs
- ❖ Micro blogs (Twitter)
- ❖ Content Communities (YouTube)
- ❖ Social Networking Site (Facebook, 2Go, BB chat)
- ❖ Virtual game world (world of warcraft)
- ❖ Virtual second world (second life) technology including blogs, picture sharing, music sharing, crowd sourcing, e-mail, instant messaging, and voice over.

These services could be integrated via social network aggregation platforms. Kumar and Kumar [4] found that Facebook is the most popular social media among post graduate and research students in an Indian university. Twitter was the second most popular among students in Indian universities. Singh and Kumar (2013) from Punjab University conducted a study to measure the usage of social networking among their research students. The findings of the study shows that majority of the respondents were found to be aware and making use of social media in their research work. Their study also reveals that Facebook is the most popular social networking site among research scholars. According to new research released by Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange (2013), American youth spend an average of 3.8 hours a day on social networking from a computer, mobile phone, and/or tablet. The study by Walsh, Fielder, Carey and Carey [5] found that female first-year college students spend nearly 12 hours a day using social media on an average. In addition, they found a correlation between lower GPAs and higher social media use. The researchers also found that the use of some types of social media has beneficial effects like helping students establish a sense of identity and building networking skills.

More than 75% of internet users in India are school and college going students. Among them, 89% of students use it for email and social networking. According to the study done by Manjunatha [6], 80% of the students spend considerable amount of time on using social networking sites regularly. Majority of Indian college students (62.6%) spend upto 10 hours per week of their time on using social networking and reportedly, 17.5% of students spent more than 10 hours per week.

Park [7] explored the usage of social networking sites by different university users. He studied three groups of users (undergraduate, graduate, and faculty) at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. The analysis indicated that the three groups of users demonstrated distinct patterns of use of social networking sites. The study stipulated that undergraduates used the profile service more than community service while graduates used the community service more than the profile service.

Lack, Beck, and Hoover [8] investigated the usage of social networking sites by undergraduate psychology major. They found that majority of students using Facebook and their account information have public accessibility and some user profiles have content of a questionable nature on their publicly viewable accounts. They suggested that formal education must be provided to students regarding the usage of these sites.

Brandtzaeg and Heim [9] stated that there are many motivational reasons for using social networking sites among people and college students particularly. Brandtzaeg and Heim drew their findings after the investigation of peoples' subjective motivational reasons for using social networking sites by performing a quantitative content analysis for 1,200 qualitative responses from social networking sites users.

Kim, Jeong and Lee [10] rightly pointed out that today college students use numerous social networking sites to stay connected with their friends, discover new "friends" and to share user created content such as photos, videos, blogs and etc.

Boyd and Ellison's study on social networking sites provides very thought provoking insights [11]. According to this study, 85% of the respondents use one or more social networking sites. The majority of the users of social networking sites spend five hours or less per week.

Vitak [12] found that there are various reasons why individuals use a social networking site. The first reason is for them to meet strangers and become friends. The majority of respondents of her research paper (57%) said that they were initially introduced to those "friends"

through mutual friends, which increased the likelihood of such relationships developing into strong ties. While a significant portion of respondents stated that they have at least a few online friends, 85% said that they do not communicate with most of their online friends, and the majority of respondents said that they considered those friendships as strong ties. Through social networking sites users tend to maintain their interpersonal relationship with their online friends because of easy communication. Therefore, they can use private messaging, chat rooms, and other methods of communication provided by the website. A study by Internet & Mobile Association of India (2011) shows that on the other hand, a strong interpersonal relationship with offline friends needs time and effort to be maintained. Distance between two users that can change an offline relationship into online relationship is also a reason for an individual to use social networking sites. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the respondents put forward that the majority of their friends have a social networking site account, which suggests that many students use the site to stay in touch with their offline friends. Keeping in touch with friends remains the primary reason for the usage of the site across both years in school and gender. Furthermore, approximately one-third (31%) of the respondents with friends who do not have social networking site account said that they would be closer to friends if they were on the site, and 87% of respondents said they had never experienced negative consequences in their offline relationships due to the contents in their social networking site profiles suggesting that most respondents benefit from using the site. With the use of private messaging and chat room of this site, students can communicate and maintain a healthy relationship with their friends from far off places with ease that takes only a few seconds. Coyle and Vaughn [13] examined the literature on social networking sites and conducted a survey on how college students are engaged in social networking [14]. They found that the main purpose of using social networking sites is to keep in touch with friends. Peluchette and Karl [15] explored the survey of Midwestern University undergraduate students regarding the use of social networking sites and their perceptions about the appropriateness of information they post, as well as how such information is accessed and used by other parties. College students use social networking sites for various purposes. Subrahmanyam and Lin [16] conducted a study to assess the use of online and offline social networking sites among the college students of a large urban university in Los Angeles. The

study revealed that the students often utilized social networking sites to connect and reconnect with their friends and family members. Regarding the usage of social networking sites, it has been seen in various studies that current college students grew up in the technology era and social networking is now just a part of a student's daily routine.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for the present study used an online and offline survey method among young (18-35) respondents. The study was conducted in 2017. Online survey was selected as the method since the main study was also related to online behavior of respondents and it would be more advantageous in the current research set up [17]. Young audience were selected as the target since the young consumers (mostly generation Y) have been found to be brought up in a technology driven environment that has enabled them to be more technology ready and has influenced their media consumption patterns to a great extent [14]. Global statistics released by Facebook also show that the majority of Facebook users globally are in this age group. Thus, the target population was justified.

### **IV. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

The questionnaire was designed using established scales to measure each construct. The modified version had seven items in semantic differential scales (refer to questionnaire). The scale to measure behavior towards SNS was adopted from Taylor et al.

Two focus group discussions were conducted among groups of 9-11 students in the age group 18-25 who were active users of social media in a central Indian university in Pune for undergraduate and postgraduate students. To further ensure error free design of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted among 50 students in the universities mentioned in India with the final questionnaire to check for wording issues and comprehensibility. The final questionnaire was revised and finalized based on the feedback received from the pilot test in both the locations.

### **V. SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION**

Facebook was selected as the focal social networking site (SNS) since it had the widest user base among other SNS globally (Statista.com, 2015). Students in the age



group 18-30 years were selected as the target population. Thus, undergraduate and graduate students were ideal for the study. The study was conducted at a large business school in Pune. Care was taken to ensure that the respondents represented all regions and genders so that heterogeneity in data could be maintained. The researchers conducted the study through question pro software. An invitation mail was floated in the university mailer which requested prospective students to take part in a survey on their behavior towards social networking sites. The mailer did not explicitly give out the study objectives. The mailer mentioned a time deadline after which the survey would be closed. This was followed by a link which would take the respondents to the questionnaire.

The first part of the questionnaire required the students to give out their usage pattern on SNS. Following this, the main study questions were presented to the respondent. This procedure led to a set of roughly 450 completely filled questionnaires from undergraduate students. The data were collected from 217 students from post graduate. The total number of respondents combining all sites was 667 of which 570 usable responses were used for analysis.

## VI. FINDING AND RESULTS

$H_0$ : There is no significant association between study level and addiction to SNS.

$H_1$ : There is significant association between study level and addiction to SNS.

**TABLE I.**  
**CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY**

		Cases			
		Valid		Missing	Total
		N	%	N	%
		N	Percent		

$p$ -value=0.00.

Since, the  $p$ -value < 0.05, the stated level of significance, hence  $H_0$  is rejected.

Thus, we may conclude that there is significant association between study level and the addiction to SNS habit.

$H_0$ : There is no significance difference between gender and mean time spent on SNS.

$H_1$ : There is significance difference between gender and mean time spent on SNS.

**TABLE II.**  
**STUDY LEVEL \* ADDICTION CROSS TABULATION**

		Addiction			
		Addicted	Not Addicted	Total	
Study Level	PG	Count	29	139	168
		Expected count	47.7	120.3	168.0
	UG	Count	133	269	402
		Expected Count	114.3	287.7	402.0
Total		Count	162	408	570

**TABLE III.**  
**GROUP STATISTICS**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Time spent on SNS	Male	323	2.958	1.7904	0.0996

**TABLE IV.**  
**INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST**

t-test for equality of means										
		Levene's test for equality of variances							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Time spent on SNS	Equal variances assumed	5.631	0.018	-0.903	568	0.367	-0.1438	0.1593	-0.4568	0.1691
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.0889	496.889	0.374	-0.1438	0.1617	-0.4616	0.1739

One of the assumptions for carrying out  $t$ -test is that the two population variances are equal which is tested by the  $F$ -test. As the  $F$ -test  $p$ -value is 0.018 (<0.05), the assumption does not hold. So, variances are not assumed to be equal. Thus, we use the bottom line of the  $t$ -test table. In the bottom row of the  $t$ -test table, we see that the  $p$ -value is 0.374 (>0.05). Thus, we do not reject  $H_0$ .

So, there is no significant difference between the mean time spent on SNS by the group of males and females.

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the average time spent by students enrolled in Post Graduate (PG) and Undergraduate (UG) programs.

$H_1$ : There is significant difference between the average time spent by students enrolled in PG and UG

**Table V.**  
**GROUP STATISTICS**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Time spent on SNS	Male	168	2.321	1.3813	0.1066
	Female	402	3.313	1.9889	0.0992

**Table VI.**  
**t-TEST**

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Time spent on SNS	Equal variances assumed	64.934	0.000	-5.892	568	0.000	-0.9913	0.1682	-1.3217	-0.6608
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.808	443.183	0.000	-0.9913	0.1456	-1.2774	-0.7051

Since the  $p$ -value for the  $F$ -test is 0.00, we reject the assumption that the variances are equal and we use the results in the bottom line. The  $p$ -value for the  $t$ -test = 0.00. Hence, the null is rejected.

So, we may conclude that there is a significant difference between the time spent by PG and UG students on SNS. This is evident from the respective averages as 2.32 against 3.31. Which means that UG students on an average spend more time on SNS as compared to PG students.

It has been noted that majority of students access SNS by smartphones (around 47%) followed by 41% from their personal laptop, 50% of the student in PG level explore SNS from hostel. WhatsApp is the most used platform followed by LinkedIn and Facebook.

70% of the student use SNS for 2-3 hours on an average in a day. The reason for accessing SNS is majorly networking and entertainment. Students think that they are not at all addicted to SNS. Students do change their SNS accessibility habit during exams. It has also been noticed that 40% students feel that SNS affects them positively.

When we look at their usage pattern, mostly they access SNS in the evening or at night because of content, friend's availability, and they rate their contacts as their good friends.

## VII. CONCLUSION

According to the results, in general students use

social networking sites for instant communication with their friends. The findings show that there is a strong relationship between study level and their friends. The findings show that there is a strong relationship between study level and addiction to SNS. It is also been noted that UG students are open to accept that they are addicted to Facebook whereas PG students don't accept that they are addicted.

It is also been noted that there is no significant difference between the mean time spent on SNS by the males and females. So, gender is not having any impact on usage pattern.

The other findings also show that there is a significant difference between the time spent by PG and UG students on SNS. This is evident from the respective averages as 2.32 against 3.31. This means that UG students on an average spend more time on SNS as compared to PG students.

It is been observed that students prefer to use social networking to view the status of their friends, share photos, like, and comment on photos, and to follow latest news. All of these are important reasons for exploring SNS. Students use social networks to learn about new information and events.

Findings indicate that students do not use social networks for educational purposes mostly. To conclude, their main reason for using social network sites is for instant contact and they see SNS as a place for professional networking and majority of them feel that social networking is positively affecting them. There is a major difference noted in their pattern of usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Undergraduate students mostly connect with friends, whereas PG students do it for professional reasons. It has also been observed that undergraduate students explore SNS from college whereas, PG students explore SNS from hostel or other places.

The findings suggest that despite spending time on the use of internet or on social networking sites, students still efficiently manage in their studies. They did not face any difficulty in meeting their academic requirements and it is been observed among both the groups that SNS is very much a way of life for undergraduate as well as post graduate students.

## VIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

As this platform is where youth of age 18-25 (on average) is between 2-3 hours daily for various reasons from studying, networking to entertainment, which creates a platform for marketers to connect with youth in different way. The study also gives insight into what is

the best suitable time to keep the content posting for respective group of students on the basis of their study level.

## IX. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The present study is limited in the study of social networking sites and behavior of students towards it. Future research can address the impact of social networking sites on studies at various levels. Another aspect can also be explored like cultural aspects and studying cross cultural behavior with respect to social networking sites and in general, the difference across the country and their impact of the study.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire :

We are conducting this research to know the behavior of student community ( UG & PG level) towards Social Networking Sites .

Demographic Details : ( Tick the appropriate box)

Study level: 1. PG Level          2. UG level

Gender:      1. Female      2. Male

1. Through which device do you access social networking sites ?
  - a. Desktop b. Tablet c. smart phones d. Laptop
2. From where do you access social networking sites ?
  - a. Library b. College c. Hostel d. Others
3. Tick the platforms you are associated with
  - a. Facebook
  - b. Linkdin
  - c. Whatsapp
  - d. Others.....(please mention)
4. What is the approximate time duration in a day when you access social networking site?
  - a. 1-2 hour b. 4-5 hours c. 7-8 hours
5. What is the major purpose of accessing social networking sites
  - a. Networking
  - b. Studying
  - c. Leisure
  - d. Entertainment
  - e. Others
6. Do you think you are addicted to social networking sites
  - a. Yes b. No
7. Do you change your social networking site habits during exam ?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Not really
  4. Sometime
8. Do you think studies get affected because of usage of social networking sites
  - a. No b. Yes
9. Please rate the importance of these attributes while choosing any social networking sites (1 is least important and 5 being most important)

User Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5
Features	1	2	3	4	5
Friends in that platform	1	2	3	4	5
Interface	1	2	3	4	5

10. Have you noticed any change in your performance because of spending time on social networking sites

- a. Yes ( Positive/ Negative)
- b.No
- c.Probably

11.You feel social networking sites :

- a.Keep you updated with friends information
- b.Platform to learn off the book
- c.Platform for networking
- d.Entertainment
- e.Others

12. Please distribute your friends on SNS among following five categories in percentage terms (approximately)

- a. Intimate
- b. Good friends
- c. Professional link
- d. Relative
- e. Acquaintance

13. Rate various factors for using social media in daily life.

- a. Instant communication \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Photo/video sharing \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Friends status \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Like photo & comment \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Latest news \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Educational purpose \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Exchange of idea \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Follow discussion groups \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Finding new friends \_\_\_\_\_

14. What time of the day do you access social networking sites :

- a. Morning b. Afternoon c. Late evening d. Night e. 24/7

15. Write the time duration and purpose of visiting these sites:

	Time	Purpose
Facebook	.....	.....
Linkedin	.....	.....
Whatsapp	.....	.....



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