



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2017; 3(2): 748-751
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www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 03-03-2017
Accepted: 04-04-2017

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Usage and preference of social media sites by various categories of respondents

Preeti and Sushma Kaushik

Abstract

Data were collected from 160 urban respondents of different age groups. Majority of the respondents had membership of social media sites except above 60 age group where only 17.5 per cent had profile on social media. Face book and whats app were the most preferred apps by all categories of respondents. Younger age group had more positive opinions towards social media as compared to older categories.

Keywords: social media, social networking sites, inter-generation, usage pattern.

1. Introduction

Social media are computer tools that allow people to share or exchange information, ideas, images, videos and even more with others through a particular network. Mobiles and Social Networking Sites have created a fourth world without boundaries. A platform for people to connect and share on 24/7/365. In the last few years, Social Network Sites such as facebook, whats app, instagram and orkut have spread widely all over the world and are used by various users for several reasons and purposes. Usage of social media in rural India has grown by 100 per cent during the last one year with 25 million users in rural India. On the other hand, urban India registered a growth of 35 per cent with the total number of users at 118 million as on April 2015 (Internet & Mobile Association of India, 2015). The world has become smaller as the social media has brought people together irrespective of their nationality thereby making them global citizens who are continuously interacting with each other. However, Each generation has its own distinct values and behaviors, so understanding the nuances of different age groups is essential for marketers trying to reach a specific target. Therefore present study was conducted to explore use pattern of different type of SNS by different age group people.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in two localities of Hisar city of Haryana State. Out of each selected locality, 20 respondents each from different age categories i.e. 16-30 years, >30-45 years, >45-60 years and above 60 years was selected randomly from both the sexes. Thus a total of 160 respondents were selected. A well-structured pre-tested interview schedule was developed keeping in view the dependent and independent variables and objectives of the study. The data were collected personally by the investigator with the respondents.

3. Results

Profile of respondents on social media sites

Information regarding profile of social media sites of respondents have been presented in table 1. Majority of the respondents had profile on social media sites in all age category 16-30 (97.5%), >30-45 (72.5%), >45-60 year (70%) however only 17.5 per cent respondents of above 60 age group had profile on social media. So, it can be concluded that in total majority (64.3%) of the respondents had their profile on social media sites. A similar finding has been reported by Anonymous (2016) who revealed that amajority of internet users aged 16-24 (91%), 25-34 (90%), 35-44 (81%) and 45-54 (74%) had a social media profile. Zheng *et al.* (2008) [14] stated that 54 per cent of those aged 16-28 had social networking profiles. But, the percentage was going lower as the age increased.

Table 1: Profile of respondents on social media sites

Sr. No.	Profile on social Media	Age categories				Total N=160 f(%)
		16-30 n=40 f(%)	>30-45 n=40 f(%)	>45-60 n=40 f(%)	Above 60 n=40 f(%)	
(a)	Have profile	39(97.5)	29(72.5)	28(70.0)	7(17.5)	103(64.3)

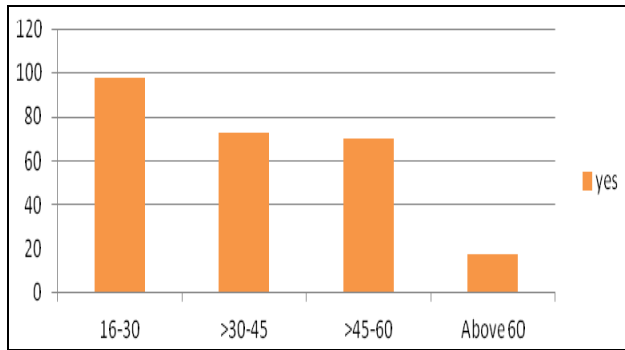


Fig. 1: Tasks preferred by respondents on internet

Social media apps preferred by respondents

The most preferred social media app across different age categories has been presented in table 2. It can be observed from the table that 16-30 and >30-45 age group gave Ist rank to facebook followed by whats app and instagram. While, other two age categories gave Ist rank to whats app followed by facebook. In total the most preferred app as indicated by percentage by all categories of respondents was facebook (56.8%) followed by whats app (55%) and instagram (31.8%). Similar findings have been revealed by Lenhart *et al.* (2010) [6] who reported that facebook was currently the most commonly used online social network among adults and 73 per cent adult had a profile on facebook.

Table 2: Social media apps preferred by respondents

Sr. No.	Preferences	Age group								Total N=160 f(%)
		16-30 n=40 f(%)	Rank	30-45 n=40 f(%)	Rank	45-60 n=40 f(%)	Rank	Above 60 n=40 f(%)	Rank	
1.	Whats app	36(90.0)	II	20(50.0)	II	28(70.0)	I	4(10.0)	I	88(55.0)
2.	Gmail	19(47.5)	IV	12(30.0)	III	9(22.5)	IV	2(5.0)	III	42(26.2)
3.	Facebook	39(97.5)	I	24(60.0)	I	25(62.5)	II	3(7.5)	II	91(56.8)
4.	Instagram	25(62.5)	III	12(30.0)	III	14(35.0)	III	0.00	V	51(31.8)
5.	Twitter	10(25.0)	V	7(17.5)	IV	4(10.0)	V	1(2.5)	IV	22(13.7)

Multiple Response

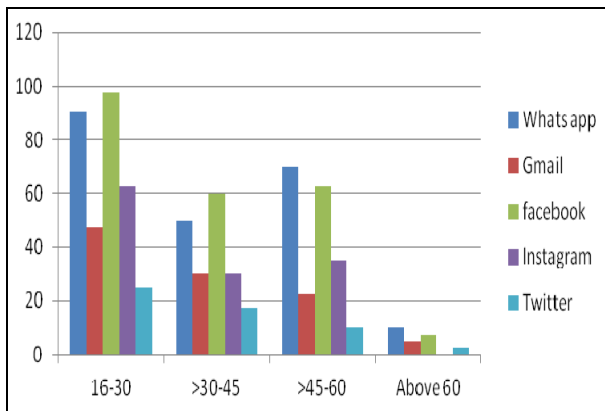


Fig. 2: Social media apps preferred by respondents

Tasks preferred by respondents on social media apps

Tasks preferred by respondents on social media apps have been presented in table 3. It can be seen from the table that respondents of all age categories gave Ist rank to contact with friends and relatives in their social media profile while, three

age category from 16-60 years assigned IInd rank to share funny things in their social media profile, above 60 age category, gave IInd rank to news stories, followed by education resource. In aggregate last rank was given to searching of products. This study is also in agreement with Manjunatha (2013) [9] who reported that among Indian students, 48 per cent stated that they used Social Networking Sites to maintain existing friends/relationships and only 19 per cent for finding new friends with 3 per cent for dating purposes. The study is also supported by Lindley *et al.* (2009) [7] who found that social media was largely viewed as suitable for maintaining existing relationships with “lightweight” interactions (rather than forming new relationships). Madden (2010) [8] also reported similar results who showed that e-mail continues to be the primary way that older users maintain contact with friends, families and colleagues, many users now rely on social network platforms to help manage their daily communications; sharing links, photos, videos, news and status updates with a growing network of contacts.

Table 3: Tasks preferred by respondents on social media apps

Sr. No.	Prefer	Age categories								Total N=160 f(%)
		16-30 n=40 f(%)	Rank	>30-45 n=40 f(%)	Rank	>45-60 n=40 f(%)	Rank	60 above n=40 f(%)	Rank	
1.	Contact with friends and relatives	39(97.5)	I	29(72.5)	I	28(70.0)	I	8(20.0)	I	104(65.0)
2.	Funny things	28(70.0)	II	25(62.5)	II	26(65.0)	II	5(12.5)	III	84(52.5)
3.	Personal pictures	27(67.5)	III	18(45.0)	III	20(50.0)	IV	4(10.0)	IV	69(43.1)
4.	News stories	21(52.5)	IV	18(45.0)	III	22(55.0)	III	6(15.0)	II	67(41.8)
5.	Product search	13(32.5)	VI	14(35.0)	V	18(45.0)	V	2(5.0)	V	47(29.3)
6.	Education resource	19(47.5)	V	17(42.5)	IV	17(42.5)	VI	5(12.5)	III	58(36.2)

Multiple Response

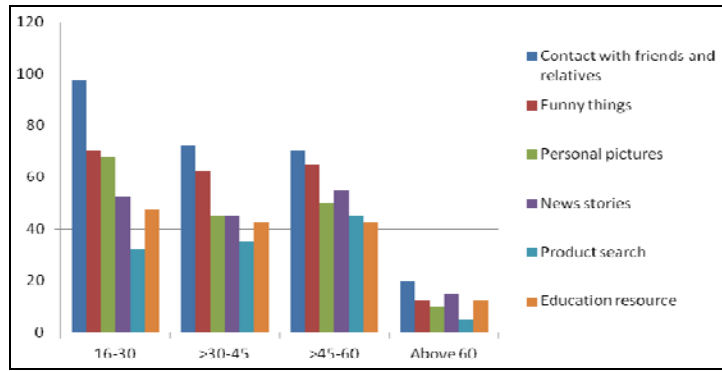


Fig 3: Tasks preferred by respondents on social media

Distribution of respondents according to time spend on media per day

The table 4 comprises information about the time spent on social media sites by respondents. It can be seen from the

table that regarding internet/social media, maximum respondents from all age category spent 2-3 hours (24.3%) followed by 1-2 hours (22.5%).

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to time spent on social media sites per day

Sr. No.	Duration of media	Age categories				Total N=160 f(%)
		16-30 n=40 f(%)	>30-45 n=40 f(%)	>45-60 n=40 f(%)	Above 60 n=40 f(%)	
(a)	Less than 30 minutes	6(15.0)	2(5.0)	1(2.5)	0(0.0)	9(5.6)
(b)	30 min -1 hr	7(17.5)	4(10.0)	7(17.5)	4(10.0)	22(13.7)
(c)	1-2hr	11(27.5)	13(32.5)	6(15.0)	6(15.0)	36(22.5)
(d)	2-3 hr.	15(37.5)	10(25.0)	14(35.0)	0(0.0)	39(24.3)

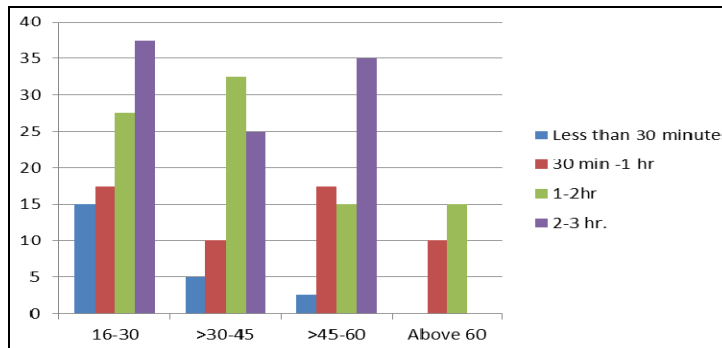


Fig 4: Distribution of respondents according to time spent on social media sites per day

Opinion of respondents towards social media

Table 5 represents opinion of the respondents towards social media. It can be seen from the table that although majority of respondents from 16-30 and >30-45 age group perceived positive points of social media, the other age groups had more negative opinion such as it is a wastage of time and it may be harmful to share personal information on social media. The weighted mean scores indicate that the respondents of 16-30 years had positive opinion towards social media whereas >30-45 and >45-60 years age category respondents had neutral opinions about social media while above 60 respondents had

negative opinion about social media. Khoulí (2013) [5] also stated that to communicate with unidentified persons without control was the highest negatives resulting from the use of social networking by families. Thus lack to the privacy policy, maintaining the confidentiality and security of circulation of information and data to users of these networks, which exposes them badly for many of the risks of theft and fraud and defamation as a result of misuse, especially among teenagers were the negative points perceived in use of social media.

Table 5: Opinion of respondents towards social media

Sr. No.	Opinion	Age categories			
		16-30 n=40 f(%)	>30-45 n=40 f(%)	>45-60 n=40 f(%)	60 above n=40 f(%)
1	Social media is an important source of news and current affairs.	35(87.5)	28(65.0)	25(62.5)	10(15.0)
2	Social media is great time pass.	38(95.0)	32(80.0)	27(62.5)	15(37.5)
3	Social media has improved my relationship with friends and family	35(87.5)	28(70.0)	25(62.5)	10(25.0)
4	Social media is wastage of time.	15(37.5)	25(62.5)	28(70.0)	35(87.5)
5	You get the feeling of being social without having to go out and socialized.	28(65.0)	15(37.5)	8(20.0)	3(7.5)
6	Sharing of personal info on social media may harmful for the persons.	22(55.0)	28(65.0)	30(75.0)	37(92.5)
Over all Weighted Mean Score		1.74	1.54	1.44	1.19

Negative =1.0-1.33, Neutral =1.34-1.66, Positive =1.66-2.0

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

As the technology is growing, the social media has become the routine for each and every person. Though this media can be used to connect people around the world and can help to give them a fundamental understanding but these also make perfect targets for scams. Therefore education regarding online frauds etc. should be created among users. Use of social media has both positive and negative implications, therefore should be used in a judicious way without getting addicted.

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