

Usage of Social Networking Sites in Pakistan Interpersonal Communication and Motives of Youth

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Abstract

Social Networking Sites have gained popularity in recent years and opened new horizon of communication. To conduction the research on this phenomenon, descriptive research method was used and statistics SPSS by applying cross tab. An instrument based upon the Interpersonal Communication Motives (ICM) scale used in past uses and gratifications research measured motivations for SNS use. The research lays Katz and Blumer's Uses and Gratification approach which states that different people use same media messages for different purposes to gratify their social and psychological needs to attain their goals. The study found that people go to Social Networking Sites to fulfill needs traditionally fulfilled by other media but for their interpersonal communication needs "Pleasure" was the prime motive on Social Networking Sites 'Relaxation" and "Affection" also important motive for SNS use.

Keywords: Youth, Social Networking, uses, interpersonal communication, motives

Introduction

Social Networking Sites have gained popularity in recent years and opened new horizon of communication. These networks are not bounded by time and space as one can freely communicate at anytime from anywhere, it also enables people to form new relationships. Social networking also facilitates its members to communicate any kind of information with the liberty of quantity and security. People keep in touch with each other through an interactive process, which is not available in face-to-face environment. According to world researches and statistics young generation is major user of social networking sites. It is the most favorite and popular topic being talked about by the youth. There are many students all over the world always log in to their accounts on different social networks as a routine matter. It would shocking figure if you count young adults logged in a single day. It would be millions of young adults logging in social networking sites. Here the question arises why million of adults are interested on these sites? This study assessed the Usage of Social Networking Sites: Interpersonal Communication Motives of Youth based on Rubin, R.B., Perse, E.M., & Barbato (1998) interpersonal motives scale including Pleasure, Affection, Escape, control, relaxation and inclusion.

Literature Review

Social networking website means the communication between friends through computer mediated communication initiated by user. This definition covers more types, such as journal writings and blogging (Sheldon, 2008), virtual places that fulfill communication need of similar interest of specific population that share and discuss ideas (Raacke, and Bond -Raacke, 2008). Coley (2006) define cyber communities in three different categories. The first type of cyber world is chat system, second is social networking sites such as MySpace, friendster, Twitter and Facebook where people create their account with personal information and then revealing that information to their "cyber community". Third category is blogs, personal website with frequently updated observation, commentaries recommended links and news (Coley, 2006). concluded that Uses and gratifications are the motives behind selection of specific media for obtaining satisfaction from their choices (Joinson, 2008). The assumption of Uses and Gratifications Theory based on that individuals use media to gratify wants or needs (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000, p. 176). In audience activity, motives are fundament elements and are the universal dispositions as defined by uses and gratifications theorists. According to scholars' user motives, influence users to take action to fulfill their want and needs (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000, p. 178). While studying internet using motives research indentified interpersonal needs were prime motive (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988) developed (ICM) scale based on previous studies which explore six interpersonal communication motives, comprising on affection, pleasure, relaxation, escape, control and inclusion. Flaherty, Pearce, and Rubin (1998) found that people use new media to seek their needs which sought by traditional media such as passing time, seeking information and entertainment. Sheldon (2008) study results showed that people use computer mediated communication to seek their similar needs including passing time, entertainment, and relationship maintenance and information seeking. Valkenburg et al., (2006) observed college students gratification and self-respect in effort to determine their result on SNS. According to different scholars adoption of SNS and its response are key elements to observe comfort and satisfaction of youngsters; they believe that both individual's adoption and personal interaction are basic factor of SNS. Study concludes that youngsters mostly believe on self-image and other's opinion toward them. SNS



opens more information to its user. Hampton and Wellman (2003) say that after the research, researcher who argues that societies can improve and social capital can be built through rapid use of new information technology. Studies conducted on the usage of internet have proved that social relationship could be improved through information technology. On and offline social get together flourish through new media. According to the researchers' quantity of neighborhood strengthened online experiences. (Lampe et al., 2006, p.169) say that it was August 2005 to January 2006 when longitudinal research conducted at Michigen State University and found that peers group view their profile more frequently than that of other groups. In the development of offline connection, prior class membership and other social interactions played a vital role in user's profile. Generally users considered information given in their profile is exact and real, as they view themselves. Researchers state that user could be as aware about his own action as about his friends. The researchers designed to increase knowledge about offline user in social networking site hemisphere as social searching. (Ellison et al., 2007) conduct a study on undergraduate college students that Facebook Enhance and maintain old relationships and build new ones, while making his profile a user quotes all about his previous information which his buddies to find him out so easily. In the light of the above results researcher concludes that Facebook is different than other computer mediated and SNS. Researcher adds that suggestions are responded on Facebook because of its structure, individual requires an email which Facebook uses to keep the user to sign in and using this email Facebook suggest individuals and group based upon this address. It helps the user to be in touch with its peer group. Joinson(2008) conducted a survey research on college students who used Facebook in UK, as mostly respondents replied that they use Facebook because they want to be in contact friend and Facebook is passive form of communication because they remain in touch through features of Facebook which it offer without communicating to each other. Users can monitor the events, uploading picture, and changing current status of profile and through browsing the data are such salient feature offered by Facebook. (Ruggiero, 2000) says that Maslow indicates five levels of hierarchy of human needs. According to Maslow human psychological need (i.e. food, water and safety); he also identified three needs of social belonging ego, self-esteem and approval. Maslow hierarchy triangle model of ascending human needs has greatly influence scientific research into human behavior. (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) argued that according to uses and gratification theory, social and psychological factors influence communication motives. Researchers have attempted to find out how attitude influence audiences' behavior in addition to gratification obtained and sought. Papacharissi & Rubin (2000) say that internet use is influenced by social and psychological factor and user perception of the internet. Uses and gratification is fundamental approach while studying computer mediated communication (e.g. social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook). Ruggerio (2000) says that Uses and gratification is fundamental approach while studying computer mediated communication (e.g. social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook) Ruggerio (2000). Raacke and Bond Raacke 2010 identify different categories of SNS user. Vary Max rotation method is used in their study. They concluded three dimensions of uses and gratification. The first dimension is to get information which includes academic purposes, posting pictures and comments on walls, getting information about events, having approximately 22% of whole variance. Secondly friendship component was observed, the aim of second component was to be in contact with olds and new friends on the other hand to locate pervious friends as well as having approximately 44% of total variance. Finally the third component was making new friends. Final component encompass 63% of total variance (Raacke, and Bond Raacke, 2010). Media scholars are hypothesizing that audiences are gratify by selection of media content. Effect of media consummation and exposure pattern can be calculated psychologically and socially needs (Garramaone 1984). Uses and gratification theory have found in pervious study that pattern of use as well as attitudes including duration of use, type of use and amount of use are associated elements for studying the internet and SNS (e.g., Papacharissi& Rubin 2000; Sheldon 2008).

According to Schutz , (1966) people communicate each other because they need affection, inclusion and control. These needs are discussed as feeling and behaviors, so needs gratify behaviorally and emotionally. To fulfill the needs of emotions, are to build or maintain mutual interest in and acknowledgement of others. On the other hand behavioral interactions build good relation with others. In interpersonal communication motives control is a behavioral need to influence and preserver power over others, and emotionally it is used to maintain mutual respect of others. Behaviorally affection based to maintain relationships love, adoration and devotion, while emotionally it is maintain mutual support and connection with others. Grahamah et al., (1993) conclude that interpersonal communication needs should be compatible with the method of gratification. The method of fulfilling interpersonal needs is modified as result of communicators personal approach, for example, people looking to fulfill need of inclusion (kill the time). By measuring the motives most often found in numerous mediated relationships, this study hopes to further explore the interpersonal communication motives of youth on social networking sites.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, it has been found that uses and gratification approach propounded by Blumer and Katz is the most



suitable theory to base the research and its finding. According to uses and gratification theory different people use the same media messages for different purposes to gratify their social and psychological needs to attain their goal (Katz & Blumer 1973). The theory explains how audience differ in the gratification they seek from the media. On the bases of needs and gratification, people can be classified or grouped into following categories which includes, personal relationship (social utility of information in conversation, substitute of the media for companionship), diversion (escape from problems emotional release), surveillance and personal identity (value reinforcement, self-understanding), (Mc Quail, Blumer, and Brown (1972). Haridakis and Rubin argued that many research conducted after 1972 indicate that different motives are linked different preferences, leading to different patterns of media exposure and use to different outcomes. Recent study added few more categories. Motives for media use, factor that influence motives and outcome from media related behavior is main focus of uses and gratification theory. (Haridakis, and Rubin, 2003).

Significance of the Study

New patterns of constant communication in shorter periods of time that social network sites are capable of providing, may influence a number of elements typical of messages delivered via a computer. This act is even more poignant in the most recent trends of social networking communication. As this new technology gives students more types of media choices, satisfaction and motivation become even more critical to analyze. It is important thing that whole researches which conducted on Social Networking Sites were conducted in abroad, but this research conducted on Pakistani youth which are high number of internet users. Apart from this Social Networking Sites are very important phenomena in the life of Pakistani youth, by identifying these motives we utilize youth in a better way.

Research Question

All the literature studies; helped in building certain research question.

- 1. What are youth interpersonal communication motives (gratify) for using SNS?
- 2. What are the prime motives of youth for using SNS?

Research Methodology

To conducting the research on this phenomenon "Descriptive Survey Research Method" was used. The aim of this study was to investigate the usage of social networking sites: interpersonal communication motives of youth. Data was collected in a survey by using a close-ended questionnaire. The instrument was developed to explore what are youth interpersonal communication motives (gratify) for using SNS? The instrument was derived from interpersonal communication motives scale which was developed by Rubin, R. B., Perse, E. M., & Barbato in 1988. Ordinal level of measurement wherein attributes were rank ordered and Likert scale ware used to measure the interpersonal motives. The population under investigation was Social Networking Sites users from International Islamic University Islamabad Capital of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Therefore, both male and female students of International Islamic University have been selected to inquire about the phenomenon under investigation. Since, International Islamic university is the blend of different cultures, colors, creeds international as well as national students, therefore this university was selected for instant study. Cluster sampling techniques selected for this research study. User of Social Networking Sites are diverse and discrete because it is almost impossible to investigate whole population, so researcher used cluster sampling technique to collect a sample of 200 students from International Islamic University Islamabad, 100 from each gender. Both genders divided into five faculties' social sciences, management sciences, language & literature, applied sciences, engineering & technology. Statistics (SPSS) by applying cross tab was used for data analysis.

Operationalization of Interpersonal Motives

Motives are something as a need or desire, emotion, physiological need or similar impulse that causes a person to act. To collect data on motives researcher replicate Rubin, et al. 's motive pleasure escape, affection, inclusion, control and affection in context of Social networking use. Interpersonal motive are define conceptualized and operationalized in the following way.

Pleasure

According to Wikipedia "Pleasure describes the broad class of mental states that humans and other animals experience as positive, enjoyable, or worth seeking, It also includes more specific mental states such as happiness, entertainment, enjoyment, ecstasy, and euphoria". For this research point of view pleasure is operationalized as individual actions do for fun enjoyment and entertainment.

Affection

Affection is fond feeling, attachment, devotion, or love but in this study affection is an act of showing



appreciation and care for others.

Relaxation

According to Wikipedia.org "Relaxation stands quite generally for a release of tension, a return to equilibrium", and it is operationalized as an activity to chill out.

Control

According to think dictionary "Power or authority to check or restrain; restraining or regulating influence" control is operationalized as a desire to gain compliance or obedience from other.

Inclusion

According to world English dictionary "the provision of certain rights to all individuals and groups in society" and researcher conceptualized as the desire to be with someone.

Escape

According to brainy quote escape is "To get free from that which confines or holds" and in this study we operationalized to pass the time to avoid other activities.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Descriptive survey was used for data collection, and a questionnaire used as tool of data collection. There were 200 respondents were selected for this research and male and female respondents got equal participation. Out of them 23% respondents were between the ages of 18-20, 47.5% were 21-23 and 23% were in 24-26 years age and 6.5% over 26 years age. Statistic results showed that 34% respondents were undergraduate 42.5% were graduate 18% were post graduate and 5.5 respondents were belonging to other categories. With the help of cluster sampling whole university students divided in following categories, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Language & Literature, Applied Sciences and Engineering & Technology and took 40 students (20 male and 20 female) from each faculty. 100% respondents was user of Social Networking Sites.

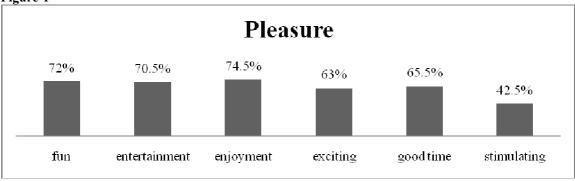
However in the response of preferred Social Networking sites researcher found significant difference between Facebook than other social networks. People are more likely to use Facebook as compared to any other social networking site. There were 75.5% respondents gave preference to Facebook while 9.5% to twitter, 5.5% to YouTube, 4% to Google Buzz and remaining 5.5% to other sites. According to the analysis more than 80% user spent less than hour to maximum 2 hours on Social Networking Sites every day. Study sample reflect that 37.5 user logged in their account several time in a day, while 29% once in a day. Majority of students change their profile occasionally, while 7% change on daily basis. Approximately 50% users logged in between 1800-2400 hours. Analysis indicates that 50% users used their SNSs account for 2 years. The majority of students have 50-100 SNSs friends and 53% people reported that they have more friend on SNSs as compare to real life. Students' responses reflect that 53.5% students' members of 1-5 groups or Social Networking Communities.

Social Networking Motives

Interpersonal communication motives for SNS uses were calculated on the basis of Rubin's interpersonal communication motives scale (pleasure, Affection, escape, control, relaxation and inclusion). (As earlier mentioned in methodology)

Pleasure

"Pleasure" is an individual action done for fun, enjoyment, entertainment, good time, exciting and stimulating. Figure-1



First interpersonal motive was labeled "Pleasure" it contains six indicators which have reflected in the above figure. The enjoyment is the most important indicator of the 'pleasure' motive. Similarly, fun and

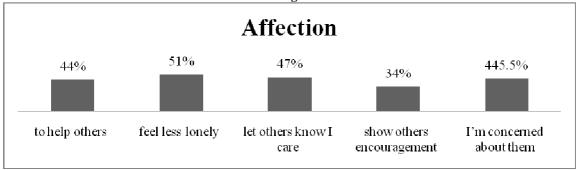


entertainment have found to be equally reflected indicators of 'pleasure' and exciting and good time also represents above 60% user. People are less interested in simulating indicator. Indicators like enjoyment entertainment and fun depicts that people use SNS for "pleasure', because our society, culture and religion give less freedom and opportunities to get pleasures in real life. So our youth spend most of their time on SNS to gratify their Pleasure needs.

Affection

In this study "affection" is an act of showing appreciation and care for others.

Figure -2



"Affection" Motive contains five indicators in which feel less lonely is the most important indicator, while help others, others know I care and concerned about them found equally reflected. Result shows that people are less interested in indicator show other encouragement of affection motive. "Affection" is closely associated with social feelings. Most of the users go on SNS to kill their loneliness, as in our society females are bound to spend their lives in homes. For this reason higher number of females uses SNS to kill their isolation. Nearly half of the respondents reported they use SNS to let other know we care. Research explores that people show care and concern about others, who are much closed to them, they may be bounded in blood relation or belongs to their peers groups.

Escape



Third motive for this study was "escape" which included four indicators in which (i) get away form pressures and responsibilities, (ii) and put of something I should do, are the most important reason to use SNS for "Escape" motive. The world round the clock in evaluation and revolution, everyone is in the state of competition to win the race, meet the deadlines of different errands and this hustle and bustle of life creates stress, anxiety and mental agony. In order to get rid of pressures and responsibilities, people use SNS. Small number of people uses SNS because they have nothing better to do. Although, majority of People engaged in work uses SNS to get relief from fatigue and frustration.

Control

"Control" is a desire to gain compliance or obedience from other.



Figure 4



Fourth motive of interpersonal communication was labeled as "Control". "Control" contains three indicators in which tell to others what to do is the most significant indicator. Rests of two indicators were also closely reflected. Data reveals that a large number of respondents were neutral while responding to control motive as they found uncertain about their feelings whether they use SNS to gratify their interpersonal motive "control" which was opertionnalized as a desire to gain compliance or obedience from others or vise versa.

Relaxation

It is an activity to chill out.

Figure 5

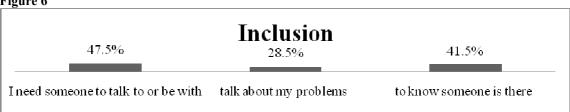


"Relaxation" motive consisted of four indicators in which (i) it relaxes me, it, (ii) it's a pleasant rest (iii) and it make me feel less tense, considerable number of population (more then 50%) has been found to be used SNS for relaxation motive. Social media offered a lot of opportunities for relaxation such as people can chat with their buddies; see shared links, which amused for a while.

Inclusion:

"Inclusion" conceptualized as the desire to be with someone

Figure 6



"Inclusion" was the last motive in interpersonal motives and it was also consisted of three indicators in which need someone to talk or be with is most important indicator and indicator to know someone is there, is also reflects important indicator but people are less interested to talk about their problem on SNS. Humans are social animal they can't live alone. Every human need to express their thoughts, emotions for catharsis and they talk each other to accomplish their goals. So our results also indicate that the more people are interested to talk with others or to know someone is there to whom they express their feelings.

Summary of Interpersonal Communication Motives of Youth for SNS Use

Figure 7



When we look the overall picture of interpersonal motives for SNS users, we found that one forth of



our total population practices SNS to gratify their "pleasure" need. "Relaxation", "affection" and "inclusion" are reflected equally momentous, while people were less interested in "escape" and "control" on SNS use. Our society imposed certain restrictions on practicing things which are against our ethical, religious, regional & national and cultural norms, such as male female interaction without legal relationship. Beside this people are offered very less facilities from government, they have limited opportunities for get-to-gather to get "pleasure", "affection" and "relaxation". So, people prefer computer mediated communication like SNS to interact and communicate matters related to various aspects of everyday life covers political, social, economic and personal issues freely and openly, because at the moment no country is capable enough to sensor online communication at a greater level. One other reason people are living in uncertainty, hustle bustle and traumatic situation, so they log in SNS to dig up some respite.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Young adults spend more time on Social networking Sites as compared to any other generation. With the extensive use of SNS by youth it is important to know what motives they gratify form these online networks. Media experts and researcher indicate about "Digital Natives" addiction to the SNS. However, there are few researchers who put light on social networking users to assess, why they use, and what outcome of their SNS use. To explore what motives of youth (gratification sought) for using SNS, the researcher conducted a survey with 200 students at International Islamic University Islamabad. Of the sample surveyed, 75.5% of students had Facebook account while 9.5% had twitter, 5.5% had YouTube, 4% had Google Buzz and remaining 5.5% had to other sites accounts. Student sample reflected that 80% users spent daily 1-2 hours on Social Networking Sites, and 67% students logged into SNS on daily basis. The majority of students had between 50-100 SNS friends and 53% people reported that they have more friend on SNS as compare to real life. Students' responses reflect that 53.5% students had a member of 1-5 groups or Social Networking Communities.

Most of the students go to SNS for "pleasure" motive, because it contain fun, entertainment, enjoyment, excitement, a good time and stimulating. Female respondents went to SNS for relaxation more than males, whereas male respondents went to SNS for "control" and "inclusion" motives. A large number of students go to SNS for "relaxation" when they are bored. A significant number of students use SNS for "pleasure", "affection" and "escape". A small number of people operate SNS for "Control" Motive. These finding strengthen what Althaus and Tewksbury suggested in 2000 that "pleasure" and "relaxation"-gratification generally associated with TV and newspaper prove to be significant predictors of using SNS. Parks and Floyd also reported similar finding in 1966, Students who often log into their SNS account are ones who go there to gratify "escape" and "control" motives. Young adults who interested in "pleasure: and "relaxations" through SNS have more friends than others. In 1996 parks and Floyd observed that who used SNS for "affection" motive had developed greater number of personal relationships. The data of this research also reflected that people did not go to SNS for "escape" from real world problem, but "affection". According to uses and gratification model people use social media under the influence of social and psychological factor. In the light of uses and gratification theory, this study found that people go to SNS to fulfill their needs by new media as they attaint through traditional media. People use SNS to gratify their interpersonal communication needs and use SNS use SNS for "Pleasure", "relaxation", "affection" and "escape" Motives.

Recommendation

Researcher suggests following grounds where future studies could be conducted.

- Comparison of users and non users of SNS Demographic characteristics.
- Social capital (bridging and bonding) in online and offline contexts.
- Motive Comparison for sites' use between high school and college students.
- what extent mass communication is a substitute for interpersonal communication and how people use false identities to communicate on SNS.

Studied on SNS should be conducted using other theoretical approaches, such as the social penetration theory and agenda-setting theory

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