Research Paper

Exploring Social Media as a Platform for Crafting Career among Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media, specifically, Social Networking Sites have increasingly been used by young adults to market their image for professional purposes. The aim of the research is to explore social media as a platform for crafting career among emerging adults. The data is collected in the form interviews. The results are discussed in the form of themes, namely, Entrepreneurship Behaviour, social media: A Way of Life, Toxic Platform, Path to Career, Positive Social Influence and Self-presentation along with their subthemes. The research reveals an increasing inclination of emerging adults towards starting up their own ventures on Social Networking Sites. The results of the research have important implications for career counselling for emerging adults.

Emerging Adulthood

Emerging Adulthood is a new developmental stage, taking place between adolescence and young adulthood, proposed by psychologist Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2000). It is defined as a period of identity exploration that takes place before individuals make long -term adult commitments. Emerging adults often report feeling not-quite-adult but not-quite-adolescent. Some of the common criticisms of the idea of emerging adulthood are financial privilege, awaiting opportunity, false limit on Identity exploration and incongruity with Erikson's theory (1968).

Like Erikson and Levinson, Keniston (1971) conceptualised youth as a period of continued role experimentation between adolescence and young adulthood. These researches may be understood as providing a theoretical background to the conceptualisation of emerging adulthood. There is also subjective difference in the sense in which it is experienced. There is this feeling of "in-between", rather than viewing oneself as lying on one extreme of the continuum. A key feature of this period of life is that it offers the most opportunity for identity exploration in the areas, of love, work, and worldviews. Its conceptualisation also differs across cultures. Thus, it is rightly understood and conceptualised as a new and 'emerging' period of life since it carries scope for more research on it.

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Social Media: Forming Connections

Social media is defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Kent (2010) broadly defined social media as, "any interactive communication channel that allows for two-way interaction and feedback," further specifying modern social media are characterized by their, "potential for real-time interaction, reduced anonymity, a sense of propinquity, short response times, and the ability to 'time shift,' or engage the social network whenever suits each particular member" (p. 645)

Social Networking Sites

Social network sites may be described as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

Facebook. The Wikipedia definition of Facebook defines it as "Facebook is a social networking website that was founded in February 2004 by Harvard University students Chris Hughes, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, Eduardo Saverin and Mark Zuckerberg". The purpose of it was to provide an online book of faces for university students to connect and share information. From then on, various attempts have been made in order to decipher the motivations of people to use it, the kind of people who are more likely to be found on this social networking site, the implications of using it and so on and so forth. Scholars from various fields are making this networking site as the area of their inquiry (Wilson, Gosling and Graham, 2012). Facebook has been considered to fulfill two basic social needs, the need to belong and the need for self-presentation (Nadkarni and Hofmann, 2012). In spite of the large amount of work that has been done pertaining to this site, a lot of it still needs to be done. Issues embedded in this concern include the relationship of Facebook use and personality, the way the menace of online bullying is understood pertaining to Facebook, how privacy is being dealt with and whether privacy concerns are related to the nationality of the individual in any capacity, etc (Caers et al., 2013).

Instagram. Instagram is a relatively newer social networking site as compared to Facebook. Wikipedia defines it as, "Instagram is an American photo and video sharing social networking service founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger". Instagram is a social media app used by more than one billion people around the world to share photos, videos and messages" (Instagram, F.A.Q, 2016). "Instagram is a relatively new form of communication where users can easily share their updates by taking photos and tweaking them using filters" (Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati, 2013). Apart from personal use, Instagram is gaining popularity among various companies. For instance, according to 2022 statistics by an Emarketer research, 7 out of 10 US Corporations are already utilizing Instagram surpassing Twitter at 67 percent.

Youtube. According to Wikipedia, "YouTube is an American online video sharing and social media platform owned by Google. It was launched on February 14, 2005, by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim". It is used for various purposes, educational, entertainment, information-sharing, etc. It offers a profusion of varied topics and abundant information on these. Its efficacy as an educational platform has been empirically established (Snelson, 2011). In the United States, YouTube saw a reach of around 74 percent in 2020, and its mobile versions are enjoying similar success globally (Statista, 2021).

LinkedIn. LinkedIn is an American business- and employment-oriented online service that was launched on May 5, 2003. It is primarily used for professional networking and career development, and allows job seekers to post their CVs and employers to post jobs. In 2021, LinkedIn's user base in the World amounts to approximately 774.61 million users. The number of LinkedIn users in the World is projected to reach 1,034.56 million users by 2025 (Statista, 2021). Keeping in mind the fact that LinkedIn is used for connecting with people primarily for professional purposes, it also simultaneously becomes a space wherein people engage in behaviors to receive social validation. It also works as a platform for developing one's networks which can be crucial for their career progress (Cooper & Naatus, 2014).

Social Media Engagement
According to Wikipedia, social media engagement can be defined as "the measurement of comments, likes, and shares that your content receives from users on a social media platform". The central proposition of Social Media Engagement theory is that higher user engagement yields greater usage of the social media platforms (Gangi and Wasko, 2016). SME theory highlights the importance of technology as a fundamental platform needed to expedite social interactions among the masses that are globally and temporally distributed (Gangi and Wasko,2016). It can also be conceptualised as, "as the state that reflects consumers' positive individual dispositions towards the community and the focal brand as expressed through varying levels of affective, cognitive and behavioural manifestations that go beyond exchange situations" (Dessart, 2017). An important and an interrelated component of Social Media Engagement behavior is Consumer Brand Engagement. It can be defined as as a psychological process that will lead to the formation of loyalty; as a behavioral manifestation; and as a psychological state characterized by a degree of vigour, dedication, absorption and interaction (Zheng et al., 2015, cited in Perreault and Mosconi, 2018). There is a need to understand the linkage between characteristics of social media users and the characteristics of social media pages to comprehend the impact of the features of social media pages on the brand performance (Perreault and Mosconi, 2018). Consumer identification with a social venture is consolidated by their engagement through social media in addition to the consumption of that product (Phillips et al., 2015). An increased social media engagement has been witnessed among people who are socially acquainted to each other (Gangi and Wasko, 2016).

Self-Presentation: Managing Impression
Erving Goffman, a Canadian Sociologist was a pioneer in using the drama metaphor in self-presentation in everyday social interactions occurring face to face (cited in Merunková and Šlerka, 2019). His theory has become the foundation on which the concepts of user behaviour and motivation, also called Impression Management (Merunková and Šlerka, 2019). Self-presentation is the attempt to control images of self before real or imagined audiences (Schlenker and Leary, 1982).

One of the potent functions served by self-presentation is the facilitation of social interaction (Goffman, 1959 cited in Potima,2013). According to Goffman, social interactions, whether formal or informal, indeed consist of some sort of structure (Potima, 2013). In adjunct to it, self-presentation also serves as a medium of gaining material and social rewards (Jones, 1990, cited in Potima,2013). Coming back to Goffman, his conceptualisation of self-presentation to which he referred to as a 'dramaturgical approach' makes a comparison between people's interactions to a stage acting setting. Herein, the performer is the individual who self-represents. This individual engages in what Goffman called 'front region control' ,

that is, molding one's behavior in accordance with the front region one is in (Goffman, 1959, cited in Zarghooni, 2007). Various self-representational strategies have been delineated (Jones, 1990; Jones and Pittman, 1982, cited in Potima , 2013). These include ingratiation, self-promotion, intimidation, exemplification and supplication. Schlenker and Leary (1982) took a self-presentation approach to comprehending social anxiety stating that the urge to be perceived in a certain way by real or imaginary audience results in an experience of anxiety in social situations. The use of Social Networking Sites such as MySpace have been explored as spaces for identity exploration and presentation of self among emerging adults (Manago et al.,2008). Individuals with narcissistic personality are more likely to engage in more facebook activity and more favourable presentation of themselves on such online networking platforms (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Nonverbal behavior such as wearing a sweatshirt with a slogan of a particular University and 'tie signs' may be understood as a form of self-presentation (DePaulo, 1992).

Career Self -efficacy
The concept of self-efficacy has been extended to the arena of career development, which has been denoted by the term "Career Self-efficacy". The pioneering research on this concept was conducted by Betz and Hackett (1981). This groundbreaking research was oriented toward understanding the personal self-efficacy beliefs of women in their career lives (Hackett & Betz, 1981). It can be defined as, "judgments of personal efficacy in relation to the wide range of behavior involved in career choice and adjustment" (Lent & Hackett,1987, as cited by Niles,1992). Career self-efficacy is an integral part of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994) which has been discussed above.

Betz and Hackett revealed two propositions in relation to career self-efficacy. These were that self-efficacy is significantly related to occupational choice; and that gender differences in self-efficacy are predictive of gender differences in occupational consideration for certain types of occupations (Betz and Hackett,1981). The Big Five personality traits also have been shown to influence career self-efficacy (Hartman & Betz, 2007). Neuroticism has been particularly been found to be a steady predictor of career inefficacy. In contrast to it, Consciousness and Extraversion have been found to be powerful predictors of career- related self-efficacy (Hartman & Betz, 2007). Factors such as motivation, commitment and general self-efficacy influence career decision making efficacy to a comprehensible extent (Niles & Sowa,1992). The kind of curriculum at school level also plays a potent role in enhancing students' career self-efficacy as was found in a research by Komarraju, Swanson and Nadler (2013). The research found that enhancing students' knowledge about careers in psychology was effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy in several aspects of career decision making including their overall career self-efficacy and increase in their confidence regarding career planning. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations have been found to jointly predict exploration goals. Self-efficacy also indicates career decidedness (Lent et al.,2017). Peer support also plays a major role in Career-Decision Self-Efficacy (Choi et al., 2011). Previous attachment relationships have a lot to do with the perception of social support and career decision making self efficacy with good attachments leading to perception of greater social support and greater career self-efficacy (Wright and Mcgovern, 2014).

METHODOLOGY
Sample
The sample comprises of 20 individuals belonging to the age group of 20-25 years. Sampling was done using Convenience sampling. The inclusion criteria of the participants included: individuals belonging to 20-25 years of age and access social media apps themselves. The

present study consisted of 20 participants. The demographic details of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table No. 1 - Table showing the demographic details of the participants (N=20)

S. No.	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Educational Qualification
1	Bhavini	Female	23	Pursuing Post-Graduation
2	Chetna	Female	22	Graduate
3	Disha	Female	23	Pursuing Post-Graduation
4	Harpreet	Female	22	Post Graduate
5	Jignesh	Male	20	12th Pass
6	Kalyani	Female	25	Post Graduate
7	Kusum	Female	22	Pursuing Post Graduation
8	Kamakshi	Female	23	Graduate
9	Mridul	Male	22	Pursuing Post Graduation
10	Mahika	Female	23	Pursuing Post Graduation
11	Nitara	Female	22	Graduate
12	Naina	Female	23	Pursuing Post Graduation
13	Nandika	Female	25	Graduate
14	Ragini	Female	22	Pursuing CA
15	Sadhana	Female	23	Pursuing MBA
16	Sanchi	Female	22	Pursuing Post Graduation
17	Vanya	Female	22	Pursuing Post Graduation
18	Yaashvan	Male	22	Pursuing Post Graduation
19	Yajna	Female	22	Graduate
20	Yogya	Female	22	Pursuing Post Graduation

Instruments

The tool chosen to collect data for the current study was a semi-structured interview. The objectives were to gain an understanding of the usage of social media by emerging adults for building their future career paths and to understand the impact of social networking sites as career building platforms on emerging adults.

Procedure

Participants were approached through call. They were told that they would be asked about their experiences as a social media user. Their demographic details were collected as a part of rapport formation. In order to inform participants about their right to withdraw at any moment from the study, their verbal consent was taken. They were informed that the entire interview would be recorded for the purpose of restoring the data in order to ensure that there were no gaps left in the collection of the responses. In adjunct to it, it aids the researcher in visiting the data back and forth for a better comprehension of the details revealed by the participants. Reassurance about maintenance of anonymity and confidentiality of personal details and interview answers was also provided. Data was collected through telephonic interview. The tool chosen to collect data for the current study was a semi-structured interview.

RESULTS

Table No. 2 - Table showing themes and subthemes formed after thematic analysis (N=20)

Themes	Subthemes	Excerpts
Entrepreneurship Behavior		*"As I mentioned I thought of starting my own page on Instagram to show my paintings and sketches. I did start a page as well."* *"Han Main Kahin Kabar sochti hoon Ki Maybe I can do that. Jaise main abhi Soch rahi hun Kuchh baking ke business ka. To agar ismein set Ho Gaya, usmein to I can think ki banaa sakte ho website aur ye sab. Usse tum ye kar sakte ho."* *Yeah I really want to open something of my own. I started one brand. It's called Nitara. And, it's an apparel brand. I was there for around 4-5 months. It is good to me.* *"And now I can use Instagram for my business purpose also. In Covid times I started some small businesses. It was running fine then but after Covid I am again back to my job"*
Social Media : A Way of Life	Habit Leisure Source of knowledge Socialisation	*"I think by default are habits are converted into that sense that whenever we are seeing our phone, whenever we are doing anything on a phone automatically it goes through these sites."* *"They have the habit of using it."* *I think if you're talking about Instagram then it's more about comedy -related content. It just lightens up my day and I like it.* *"It is because most of the people use it for leisure also."* *Very often. Like whenever I am free I am on Instagram and Snapchat.* *I would say I was very bad at cooking. So, I learnt it on social media only. Whether I would say it's YouTube or whether with its Instagram. I love to dance that is what I told you in the very start. So, I learnt it from there only. It's very easy because it's free and you can learn it from social media only. They are teaching there. There are classes online only. I got a lot of knowledge* *" if you want to improve your vocabulary you can just*

go for synonyms, but yeah that's internet."

"So if I talk about Indian newspapers they are very lengthy. And the kind of language they use is not very friendly. But if you talk about the news pages on Instagram, these pages are started by very young people who are very unbiased. So they try to portray news in a very real and neutral format. They do not try to give their opinion. Instead try to be very unbiased. Moreover the content they put forward is very short and very crisp."

Like jo thodi reels aati hai unko Dekh Kar Pata Chalta Hai Ki hai ya nahin Pata Tha Ab pata chal gaya. Like life hacks.

But I don't watch it because it interests me. I watched them just to stay updated about what's going on. I also have an interest in tarot card reading and I am also learning that.

In terms of personal learning a lot of new skills like music creativity short 2minute recipes

"If I have to connect with somebody whom I am not very close to, I can still do that because they are just a DM away."

"So I Use Facebook. It's like family there."

"Facebook is quite cool. Like family is there. Friends are there. So we connect on messenger. And we tag each other. That's great. That's it."

Toxic Platform	Addictive Negative effect on self (comparison; self-esteem) Invasion of Privacy FOMO	*"Kyunki addictive bahut hai. Jyada addiction ho jayegi aapko. Rahe nahi paoge. Kholkar yahi chij hai. Yah Kya Hai. Is per kitne likes a gaye."* *"What kind of reach it is getting and you know. I became very adamant that you know I want to increase my followers. And then the reels came up and then it became even more addictive."* *"If you do not understand the right way to use these platforms it will ruin your self esteem and confidence actually. It is because there is science behind it. You keep looking at people mind you look at what they are doing and you are constantly comparing yourself to them."*

" This appreciation can also become negative because then you start contemplating that what went wrong if you don't get it. In real life if you make a project and people don't appreciate it will not create a lot of stress."

"Taking it like a pressure that you have to upload daily to engage with your followers. So It was lot of pressure to take and I honestly didn't want to take that pressure"

"Sometimes I even felt that I should not post it because if it affects my self esteem in doing art, then I should probably not use it."

"So even if you are confident in your real life, it impacts you negatively if you are not getting enough likes as others are"

"It might not be tangible for you to notice but it might lead to a situation of unrest. It might disturb your balance later in life."

"There is this thing on Instagram. Stranger requests and you can reject them. But still, I don't trust these sites."

"I think that's a breach of privacy of their family. Because it's their decision to post and have a YouTube channel. You do not really take the consent of each and every one of your family member. Even if it's adult that's fine. But then they are younger children. I think that is something that should not be done"

"It just make me feel if I am missing out on something. But that is just a temporary discomfort I would say because I realise that my priority is to give services only when I feel that I am competent enough."

"FOMO"(on being asked the reason for joining SNSs.

| Path To Career | Skill learning and enhancement | *"Social media has improved my skills. Like it pushes you to brush up your skills because you want to show it off. So if I want to make paintings more often because I want to show it to my friends."* |
| | Showcasing and exploring talent | *"So I never explored these skills before. I never used acrylics. I never used different techniques in art. So I* |

	Professional updating Requirement of job roles	*didn't know that I could do this. But by learning by seeing other people do this and to try to explore and try it out myself, then that's how I learnt these skills."* *"It motivated me to further more keep creating art and posting it."* *"For example, I have to apply for a new job or for eg I'm looking for new college abroad, so I need a platform where I can connect to people who have been through the same path or who are already studying in that college."* *"It's a must in today's age because I am in HR myself so I get people who approach me, apart from getting job opportunities."* *"I am connected to the students as well. Because I am in an educational Consulting company. So, I connect to the students and they are only available easily available on WhatsApp. So that is why I am always available on WhatsApp".*
Positive Social Influence	Social Support Seeking Mentorship Inspiration	*"jo aapko support kati ahi for donation, you know any kind of help, so the Instagram is the key here for this anima welfare thing."* *"We cant just take guidance from others who are better than us. We should get their mentorship."* *"There is this guy Arpit Mathur I have seen him you know he started by rescuing to animals and now he has his own shelter so I think these social networking sites you know give so much visibility to us especially for me kyunki you get inspired ya."* *"Nahi bilkul..bilkul ...in sab cheezon se to mai inspire hota hoon . In sab logon ko mai appreciate bhi karta hoon ki haan inka talent hai aur ye dikha rahen hain to aur uss talent ke through ye log earn bhi kar rahen hain to haan..inse..inse inspiration milti hai"*

DISCUSSION

The broader objective of the research was to explore social media as a platform for crafting career among emerging adults.The specific objectives of the research entailed comprehending the usage of social media by emerging adults for building their future career paths and the impact of social networking sites as career building platforms on emerging adults. The results of this endeavour are expatiated henceforth in the form of certain overarching themes that emerged from the research, as discussed below.

Entrepreneurship Behavior

The research revealed an increasing entrepreneurial orientation among emerging adults. Previous researches have also found entrepreneurial intentions among emerging adults (Geldof et al., 2014; Gibson et al., 2014). The participants in the current study discussed at length about their previous entrepreneurial endeavours on Social Networking sites. In adjunct to it, they pointed out their desire for beginning a venture of their own on social media platforms. With hopefulness in her voice, one of the participants mentioned,

> *"Han Main Kahin Kabar sochti hoon Ki Maybe I can do that. Jaise main abhi Soch rahi hun Kuchh baking ke business ka. To agar ismein set Ho Gaya, usmein to I can think ki banaa sakte ho website aur ye sab. Usse tum ye kar sakte ho."*

Another participant, feeling nostalgia said, *"And now I can use Instagram for my business purpose also. In Covid times I started some small businesses. It was running fine then but after Covid I am again back to my job".* With her voice changed from a tinge of sadness to hopefulness, in the later part of the interview, she mentioned, *"Yeah I really want to open something of my own. I started one brand. It's called Nitara. And, it's an apparel brand. I was there for around 4-5 months. It is good to me."*

Various studies have found an optimistic entrepreneurship orientation among young adults. For instance, Koe (2016) found an optimistic entrepreneurship intention among University students with innovativeness being a driving factor for such an orientation. A casual optimism was evident pertaining to future entrepreneurship behavior when she mentioned, *"I feel that all of these are really important if you know when these sites can be utilized for marketing purposes. So like in future, if I think of starting something of my own, then of course it will be helpful."*

These were the views of participants that reflected their unyielding inclination to begin a venture of their own on social media platforms. In adjunct to it, a bunch of participants talked about social media being a potent platform that would aid them in bringing themselves closer to their ideal career. Thus, it can be said that while, for certain participants, social media is the destination site pertaining to their career , For others it it the path that will take them to their desired career destination. This is discussed below:

Path To Career

The participants mentioned multi-fold outlooks upon contemplating social media as a path to career. These were, a platform for Skill learning and enhancement, Showcasing and exploring talent, Professional updating and Requirement of job roles. These are scrupulously discussed below:

Skill learning and enhancement

A great deal of participants mentioned how social media serves as a platform for learning and enhancing multifarious skills. One of the participants mentioned, *"Social media has improved my skills. Like it pushes you to brush up your skills because you want to show it off. So, if I want to make paintings more often because I want to show it to my friends."*

Another participant revealed how social networking site like Instagram has helped her learn and explore skills in her art form. She says, *"so, I never explored these skills before. I never used acrylics. I never used different techniques in art. So, I didn't know that I could do this. But by learning by seeing other people do this and to try to explore and try it out myself, then that's how I learnt these skills."* This has also been confirmed by previous studies. For

instance, Yu et al. (2010) revealed that social networking sites stimulate skill -learning for future academic or career success among University students.

Showcasing and exploring talent and Passion

It is quite reassuring and optimistic that almost the participants, except a few feel that social networking sites are a great platform for showcasing one's talent. With a confident tone, one of the participants mentioned, *"Of course I have a professional account as well, where I upload videos and my music stuff. So yeah, it helps me show my talent and get more followers…."*

Sharing a similar opinion, another participant pointed out,
"And it gave me a space for my dance videos. Initially I used to put my dance videos on my personal platform. And then it shifted to a more professional one which was specifically for dance and it became a really important part."

Another participant mentioned,
"Definitely definitely this is right now just an initiative but because I upload my work there and I have collaboration with NGOs and animal activists. Main zarur sochungi ki I would get it registered as a charity trust or as an NGO."

In alignment with these results, a research by Adzmi et al. (2021) revealed that social media motivated and served as a medium to express talents of Malaysians during Covid times. In addition to it, the platform also served as a means of income for a majority of the participants.

Professional Updating

Digital world as we are living in, a lot of participants mentioned using Social Networking sites for the purposes of getting updates about job roles, recruitments, job market and the like. In the words of one of the participants,
"For example, I have to apply for a new job or for eg I'm looking for new college abroad, so I need a platform where I can connect to people who have been through the same path or who are already studying in that college."

Another participant shared the same view,*"It's a must in today's age because I am in HR myself so I get people who approach me, apart from getting job opportunities."* Mehta and Sharma (2016) found that most recruiters in current times do realise the importance of social media in sourcing candidates. This realisation comes from a space of personal interest as there is no evidence of any professional policies that demand recruiters to do so. Barnett, Martin and Sewell (2011) highlighted how Social Networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are being used by employers to update information about their company, sourcing candidates and the like.

Requirement of Job Roles

While talking about their use of the Social Networking sites, a number of participants pointed out that a certain amount of their social media usage in current times has been accelerated as a result of requirements of roles they have been assigned of, whether it was for a job, internship or fulfilling tasks for a college society. For instance, a participant mentioned,
"I am connected to the students as well. Because I am in an educational Consulting company. So, I connect to the students and they are only available easily available on WhatsApp. So that is why I am always available on WhatsApp"

Another participant mentions, "*like I was in the placement team. So, I used to contact the placement teams of various other colleges. A lot of networking happens through LinkedIn only.*" To this end, a research by Neill and Lee (2016) discussed the importance of the social media presence of public relations officers in today's time. The research also highlighted the importance of being efficient with technology for these purposes.

Social Media: A Way of Life
Majority of participants discussed the way social media has become a very part of their lives. To this end, they talked about social media use becoming a habit, leisure use of social media , social media being a source of knowledge and a platform for socialisation. These aspects are discussed below:

Habit
Talking about how Social Networking Sites have seeped into one's daily life, a participant mentioned, *"I think by default are habits are converted into that sense that whenever we are seeing our phone, whenever we are doing anything on a phone automatically it goes through these sites."* In the same light, another participant mentioned, *"They have the habit of using it."* Highlighting this aspect, a research by Osatuyi and Turel (2018) revealed that habit as a reflexive system manifestation is a key element that drives social media use.

Leisure
A lot of participants also pointed out using social media as a leisure time activity. One of the participants mentioned,*"I think if you're talking about Instagram then it's more about comedy -related content. It just lightens up my day and I like it."* Another participant mentioned, *"Very often. Like whenever I am free, I am on Instagram and Snapchat."* Talking from observation, a participant mentioned, *"It is because most of the people use it for leisure also."* A pioneering research on social media usage in Indian context by Bolar (2009) mentioned a leisure time activity as one of the motives behind social media usage by people.

Source of Knowledge
An encouraging finding was that a lot of the participants talked about social media being a source of knowledge and updates for them. An even more uplifting revelation was that most of the participants found social media platforms to be authentic platforms in terms of news updates. One of the participants disclosed,

> *"I would say I was very bad at cooking. So, I learnt it on social media only. Whether I would say it's YouTube on weather with its Instagram. I love to dance that is what I told you in the very start. So, I learnt it from there only. It's very easy because it's free and you can learn it from social media only. They are teaching there. There are classes online only. I got a lot of knowledge."*

Another participant, reflecting upon the authenticity of these platforms pointed out,

> *"So if I talk about Indian newspapers they are very lengthy. And the kind of language they use is not very friendly. But if you talk about the news pages on Instagram, these pages are started by very young people who are very unbiased. So they try to portray news in a very real and neutral format. They do not try to give their opinion. Instead try to be very unbiased. Moreover the content they put forward is very short and very crisp."*

Similarly, another participant mentioned,

> *"See, there are so many sites and even if we get some false news or fake news. So these sites help to clear things out. They are on ground workers. They are available there live and we are able to see. So I feel that quite pure info."*

Chan et al. (2020) highlighted Covid times to put forth the significance of social media as an efficient platform for knowledge dissemination.

Socialisation

An expected yet important finding was that almost all participants regarded social networking sites as a platform for socialising. One participant revealed, *"Facebook is quite cool. Like family is there. Friends are there. So, we connect on messenger. And we tag each other. That's great. That's it."* Another participant, quite casual in her tone said, *"If I have to connect with somebody whom I am not very close to, I can still do that because they are just a DM away."* Yet another participant mentioned, *"My primary aim of coming in Instagram was to be in touch with people with whom I was in school."* In line with the above findings, Brandtzæg and Heim (2009) revealed one of the reasons of people to use Social Networking Sites was to stay connected with friends and socialise.

Self-presentation

One of the most frequent themes throughout the responses of participants was the presentation of self on Social Networking sites. Participants talked at length about how crucial it is to present oneself in an authentic manner on the Social Networking sites and how people who present an inaccurate image of themselves on these platforms end up harming one's own well-being as well as the well-being of people who follow them. In this light one of the participants mentioned,

> *"So it might eventually lead them to do things that you don't like. You tend to compare your physical features. That is the first step. End up matching a social economic status that you might not belong to."*

Another participant mentioned, *"To show, like their lavish lifestyles. Like the kind of lives, they are living. I mean some are real too. But yeah, mostly are fake."* Yet another participant highlighted the importance of an authentic presentation of self on these platforms by saying, *"Stay true to yourself. Stay away from anything that can potentially harm your confidence. Stay focused on yourself and put doubt not for validation but to put out your work.*

Huang (2014) highlighted the four tactics that adolescents use for self-presentation on social media. These included self-promotion, ingratiation, manipulation and damage control.
The following themes analyse the positive as well as negative influence of Social Networking Sites on people's lives, both personal as well as professional.

Toxic Platform

Few participants used the term "toxic" to refer to Social Networking Sites. Four subthemes characterised this theme. These were addictive, negative effect on self (comparison; self-esteem), Invasion of Privacy and FOMO (Fear of Missing out). These are discussed below:

Addiction

While reflecting about the negative influence of social media platforms, a number of participants mentioned that these platforms are quite addictive. One of the participants

mentioned, *"Kyunki addictive bahut hai. Jyada addiction ho jayegi aapko. Rahe nahi paoge. Kholkar yahi chij hai. Yah Kya Hai. Is per kitne likes a gaye."*

While talking about her journey on these platforms by way of showcasing her talent, another participant mentioned, *"What kind of reach it is getting and you know. I became very adamant that you know I want to increase my followers. And then the reels came up and then it became even more addictive."* In this area, Kuss and Griffiths (2017) highlighted how factors such as FOMO, smartphone addiction, and nomophobia can lead to SNS addiction.

Negative effect on Self
A majority of participants talked about how SNSs by way of factors such as comparison, jealousy, peer pressure can impact different aspects of one's self such as self-esteem self-confidence, etc.

One of the participants mentioned,
> *"If you do not understand the right way to use these platforms it will ruin your self esteem and confidence actually. It is because there is science behind it. You keep looking at people mind you look at what they are doing and you are constantly comparing yourself to them."*

Another pointed out,
> *"This appreciation can also become negative because then you start contemplating that what went wrong if you don't get it. In real life if you make a project and people don't appreciate it will not create a lot of stress."*

Reflecting about her professional engagement on social networking sites, another participant pointed out, *"Taking it like a pressure that you have to upload daily to engage with your followers. So, it was lot of pressure to take and I honestly didn't want to take that pressure"*.

Verduyn et al. (2020) showed that SNSs negatively impact SWB due to the overly positive (rather than negative) content on SNSs, people's tendency to select upward (rather than downward) comparison targets and to react to these targets in a contrasting (rather than assimilating) manner.

Invasion of Privacy
The views of participants pertaining to the use of SNSs that were negatively-tinged included a concern of invasion of privacy. One of the participants mentioned, *"There is this thing on Instagram. Stranger requests and you can reject them. But still, I don't trust these sites."* Bringing the issue of family, one of the participants mentioned,
> *"I think that's a breach of privacy of their family. Because it's their decision to post and have a YouTube channel. You do not really take the consent of each and every one of your family members. Even if it's adult that's fine. But then they are younger children. I think that is something that should not be done"*

FOMO: Fear of Missing out
In all three participants mentioned this phenomenon. One of them mentioned,
> *"It just make me feel if I am missing out on something. But that is just a temporary discomfort I would say because I realise that my priority is to give services only when I feel that I am competent enough."*

On being asked about the motivation to join Social Networking platforms, a participant mentioned, "*FOMO*". Another participant said, "*There might be situations where in a feel that something is missing, FOMO feeling. But overall, I like to see content because it makes me happy and it makes me sad at the same time.*"

Balta et al. (2020) showed that trait fear of missing out and neuroticism were indirectly associated with phubbing via state fear of missing out and problematic Instagram use. State fear of missing out was directly and indirectly associated with phubbing via problematic Instagram use.

Positive Social Influence
A bunch of participants indicated SNSs to be a source of positive influence in terms of Social Support, Seeking Mentorship and a source of Inspiration. These subthemes are discussed below:

Social Support
Talking about social support, one of the participants revealed, "*jo aapko support kati ahi for donation, you know any kind of help, so the Instagram is the key here for this animal welfare thing.*" Another participant mentioned,
> "*So that encouraged me you know. That I posted it and people liked it. They encouraged me that you know, you should post more. So I think one us that it boosts your confidence. Or even if you want, you should post consistently and take it up as a field. You get the confidence encouragement and I realised that you can do a lot.*"

Oh et al. (2013) found that emotional support was a dimension to be most prevalent in the context of Facebook.

Seeking Mentorship
By way of making a contrast between getting discouraged and seeking mentorship, rather, one of the participants pointed out, "*We can't just take guidance from others who are better than us. We should get their mentorship.*"

Source of Inspiration
A lot of participants mentioned that SNSs are a space of inspiration. One participant mentioned,
> "*there is this guy Arpit Mathur I have seen him you know he started by rescuing to animals and now he has his own shelter so I think these social networking sites you know give so much visibility to us especially for me kyunki you get inspired ya.*"

Another participant mentioned,
> "*Nahi bilkul..bilkul ...in sab cheezon se to mai inspire hota hoon . In sab logon ko mai appreciate bhi karta hoon ki haan inka talent hai aur ye dikha rahen hain to aur uss talent ke through ye log earn bhi kar rahen hain to haan..inse..inse inspiration milti hai*".

Meier and Schäfer (2018) found positive association between such ''Instagram inspiration'' and users' affective well-being. In addition to it, the research revealed 'Benign envy' as an emotional outcome of assimilative upward comparisons which sensitizes individuals for social information on how to self-improve and close up to their peers, thus, facilitating inspiration.

Thus, the discussion delineates the overarching themes of the views of participants pertaining to social networking sites as career building platforms. The views shared by participants have also been supported by various empirical researchers conducted around similar areas.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the research is to explore social media as a platform for crafting career among emerging adults. The results were discussed in the form of themes, namely, Entrepreneurship Behavior, Social Media: A Way of Life, Toxic Platform, Path To Career, Positive Social Influence and Self-presentation along with their subthemes. The research revealed an increasing inclination of emerging adults towards starting up their own ventures on Social Networking Sites. The results of the research have important implications for career counselling for emerging adults.

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