

Facebook Intensity among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp have gained popularity among college students for communicating with their friends and for exchanging their views on various personal and social issues. The present study was carried out to examine gender differences in Facebook intensity, i.e. level of emotional connectedness to Facebook, of college students. Total 100 students (50 male and 50 female students) participated in the study. Their facebook intensity was measured by using Facebook Intensity Scale developed by Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007). Data was analysed by using t-test and significant difference was found between male and female students in their level of facebook intensity at 0.05 level with male students showing higher facebook intensity level as compared to female students.

Keywords: *Social media, Facebook Intensity, College students*

Social media sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp have gained popularity among people, especially among college students for communication. Statistics show that Facebook is the most favorite social network worldwide with 241 million users in India and highest number of users are between the age group of 18 to 24 years with more male users (61.8 millions) as compared to female users (20.8 billions) (Statistica).

Uses and gratification theory explains the motivations behind the use of social media. According to this theory, being informed, identifying with characters of the situation in the media environment, entertainment, enhancing social interactions and getting escape from the stresses of daily life are five goals of media use (McQuail, 2010). Social networking sites such as Facebook provide opportunity to their users to maintain existing social ties, to reconnect with past friends who are now geographically away and also to make new friends with whom they share common interests (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2007; Raake and Bonds-Raccke, 2008).

Although Facebook has provided a platform for connecting with people, it also has negative impact on lives of people. Researchers are interested in examining impact of heavy use of

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Facebook on psychosocial development and psychological wellbeing of students. Labrague (2014) explored the effects of Facebook usage on adolescents' emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. They found that time spent on Facebook increases depression and anxiety scores. Abushiba and Mustaffa (2014) have discussed a possible relationship between Facebook usage and academic performance. Carr (2008) and Hamilton (2009) have found a negative impact of Facebook usage on academic performance of users. High usage of Facebook is also found to be negatively related to self-esteem (Faraon and Kaipainen, 2014). Masin and Foubert (2014) analyzed the effect of the intensity of Facebook use on college students' development of mature interpersonal relationships and found that students who use Facebook more intensely have less developed mature interpersonal relationships than those who do not.

Shen, Vodanovich, and Khalifa (2015) carried out a survey on 123 students in the UAE. They compared the Arab and non-Arab university students below the age of 30 years with respect to their motivations, Facebook intensity and their social capital development. They also examined gender differences in intensity of Facebook usage. Findings reveal that male users have more Facebook intensity as compared to female users.

In a survey carried out on 567 Greek teenagers, Vlachopoulou and Boutsouki (2014) found a positive relationship between Facebook usage and extraversion and peer group pressure.

Objectives

1. to measure Facebook intensity level of male Facebook users in undergraduate college
2. to measure Facebook intensity level of female Facebook users in undergraduate college
3. to examine gender differences in level of Facebook intensity

Hypothesis

1. There would be significant difference between male and female college students with respect to their Facebook intensity level.

METHOD

Sample:

Total sample of the present study consists of 100 college students of Arts, Commerce and Science faculty of The New College, Kolhapur (50 male and 50 female students). Only those students were selected who use Facebook and their age ranges from 18 to 22 years.

Tools:

Facebook Intensity Scale (FIS) developed by Ellison et al. was used to measure level of Facebook intensity of the participants. This scale consists of total 8 items which includes 6 items measuring participants' emotional connectedness to Facebook, two items asking time spent on Facebook and number of Facebook friends. Participants have to choose their response for first six items from 1 to 5 Likert-type scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree.

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Procedure:

Participants were contacted during their lectures and the purpose of the study was explained to them in brief.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Showing Mean, SD and t value of male and female students with respect to their facebook intensity level

Group	N	M	SD	df	t value	p value	Significance
Male students	50	19.12	4.99	98	2.0863	0.0395	Significant
Female students	50	17	5.17				

Table no. 1 reveals that mean score of male students on Facebook Intensity Scale is 19.12 with SD of 4.99 and mean score of female students is 17 with SD of 5.17. Male students have scored higher on Facebook Intensity Scale as compared to female students and this difference is statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the hypothesis stating that there would be significant difference between male and female students with respect to their Facebook intensity level is accepted. One possible explanation is that boys and girls are socialized differently and this might also reflect in their preferences for ways and styles of communication (Mohindra and Azhar, 2012). Girls are taught to express their feelings but boys are discouraged to do so since their childhood. This may result in women preferring face-to-face communication whereas men preferring on line communication.

This research finding is also supported by previous research finding. Shen, Vodanovich, and Khalifa (2015) also found that male users have more facebook intensity level as compared to female users.

One limitation of the present research is that sample is drawn only from one college and hence, the finding can not be generalized and further research should be carried out with large sample.

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