

Assessing the impact of face book on social lives – A conceptual study

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Abstract: Social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook are affecting our daily lives. This research paper highlights, how Facebook impacts people and society with reference to India. The required information needed to draw inferences were collected through a questionnaire and conducted an offline survey on people of different profiles and ages using Stratified sampling technique. Also, secondary data was collected from news reports on Internet about people who used Facebook in a certain manner to express their ideas or to voice their anguish. The combined study showed how Facebook can affect the individuals at psychological level, social bodies at administration level and thus help in moulding their behaviors. Research report found that Facebook can have a negative impact on people's lives in a number of ways, including: Physical effects, which is evident in the form of burning eyes, headaches, disturbed sleep, and musculoskeletal problems. Psychological effects in the form of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, loneliness, and perceived stress. Reduced well-being and sleep disturbances etc.

Keywords: Emotional Impact of Facebook, Psychological behavior, SNS, Social Impact of Facebook, Social Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a dynamic process with the interacting components of sending and receiving Information. Years ago we used the traditional ways of communications: i.e. Face-to-Face, Phones or Letters. But oflate, due to advent of internet and technology, our communication way and process has undergone with transitional changes. Virtual communication and networking is becoming very pre dominant with the rapid adoption of technology. Facebook is an example of such social networking websites. Developed by Mark Zuckerberg of Harvard University in February 2004, the site was originally developed for college and university students as a way to connect with each other. Hosting the most members for a college based social networking websites. As Facebook is open for anyone who has a valid e-mail address, the researcher believes that Facebook has significantly affected the way people

are communicating and interacting with each other. Facebook has extra features other than sending-receiving messages; the website includes members' pictures, personal information, interests and group members. Facebook users can choose their personal levels of security to prevent strangers from accessing their personal information. The platform enables anyone, anywhere, to build up complete applications that members can choose to use. Applications range from photo sharing to graffiti walls and everything in between.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kirkpatrick (2010) Facebook's impact on society might go far beyond meeting new friends and sharing music, videos etc. It is bringing the world together. It has become an overarching common cultural experience for people worldwide, especially young people. Researchers think that Facebook might be the fastest-growing company of any type in history, its membership spans generations, geographies, languages, and class. It changes how people communicate and interact, how marketers sell products, how governments reach out to citizens, even how companies operate. It is altering the character of political activism, and in some countries it is starting to affect the processes of democracy itself.

Valenzuela, Park & F. Kee (2008) Facebook profile consists of two types of messaging: private and public (wall). The private messaging is somehow similar to web e-mails services, yet in public; friends can leave their comments, photos and videos. To keep users updated about their social circle, Facebook has two features: "News Feed", which appears on the homepage of each user, and "Mini-Feed", which appears in each individual's profile. "New Feeds" update a personalized list of news stories throughout the day generated by the activity of "friends" (e.g., John added Rolling Stones to his favorites, Jane changed her status to "single" again, etc.)

Khalid H (2017), "The Effects of Social Networks on Pakistani Students." First thing we discovered was that in Pakistan, every student is using some kind of platform for socializing as well as for academic and educational purposes. Most of the students have accounts on Facebook and use YouTube for different purposes. If the students use these platforms in a balanced way, it will not harm their health. Secondly, we found out that there is a huge number of users who are unaware of the terms and policies of the social networks they are using. Thirdly, we came to the conclusion that social networks plays a positive role in students' academic activities.

Gok, T. (2015), "The positive and negative effects of digital technologies on students' learning" The positive and negative effects of digital technologies and social networking sites on the students were examined in this study. Research results presented that half of the students spend time one and half hour/day on smartphone. They generally use the smartphone for calling friends, messaging, listening to music, watching video/clips, and especially using social networking sites (Facebook, Youtube, Blogs, Foursquare, Twitter, etc.). Female and male students (65%) spend more than two hours per day on computer and internet for similar purposes. z"The positive and negative effects of digital technologies on students' learning" The positive and negative effects of digital technologies and social networking sites on the students were examined in this study. Research results presented that half of the students spend time one and half hour/day on smartphone. They generally use the smartphone for calling friends, messaging, listening to music, watching video/clips, and especially using social networking sites (Facebook, Youtube, Blogs, Foursquare, Twitter, etc.). Female and male students (65%) spend more than two hours per day on computer and internet for similar purposes.

Mehmood, S. and Taswir, T. (2013), "The effects of Social Networking Sites on the Academic Performance of Students in College of Applied Sciences, Nizwa, Oman." The beneficial results of this campaign and the uses and gratifications highlighted in this study, shows social networks as a significant influence in the academic performance of students. The research also concludes that a large section of students capitalize on the importance of human classroom face to face instruction, the social networks used for educational / tutoring should be able to apply these principles in a virtual classroom.

Rationale for topic selection:

The purpose of this study was to assess the Facebook use and negative behavioral and mental health outcomes. Facebook was chosen over other social media due to its widespread use, significant influence on peoples' lives and increased research attention. Even though several studies have indicated the correlation between Facebook and mental and behavioral disorders, there is still lack of concrete evidence. As mental illnesses are a significant cause of morbidity in individuals, and given the pervasiveness of Facebook usage, a causal relationship in future research could signal an important and broad health risk. Therefore, it is essential to underscore the importance of continuous research on this topic. Given the dearth of literature reviews specifically addressing Facebook use and behavioral and mental health outcomes, this review will help shed light on the impacts of Facebook use on individuals' behavioral and mental health, so that future research and practice can develop successful strategies around healthy social media use.

Impact of face book on social lives of humans:

Facebook is a social network that allows interacting, publishing and sharing things, such as photos with friends. Moreover, every person can create a common profile, also allows users to visit the pages of friends. Moreover, users can exchange private messages, conversing among each other, posting images and videos, creating certain events and groups and inviting friends to join their groups. The power of Facebook lies in the method of spreading information from users; it offers a wide range of options in the broad exchange of information among users.

Impact of face book on the social lives of humans is analysed from three perspectives:-

- The psychological aspects of social behavior exhibited by our respondents,
- The emotional influence while selecting a particular response to a question.
- The social and political expectations of people from Facebook due to the wide reach and appeal it carries. The responses were indications of peoples' beliefs and their specific behavior on SNS.

Psychological impact:

Not more than 20% respondents claimed they are not very active on SNS and created their profile on

Facebook only to show their online presence. However, the rest of respondents were using Facebook for different reasons. In response to the question, “Why you use Facebook?” the highest no. of respondents claimed they use it to stay in touch with their family and/or friends. Our data shows that 14% persons use Facebook to socialize. For some people Facebook is a good platform to make new friends and build relationships. Such people use it to socialize with unknown or less known persons. Many of such people prefer to build friendship with opposite sex. Interestingly, 11% people mentioned that they use Facebook to get rid of boredom or just to pass their idle time. 45% people mentioned they check for updates either before going to bed or immediately after they wake up in the morning. 55% of respondents have a good friend list on Facebook having 100 or more contacts on their friends list. The people who are actively using their Facebook account, they usually have a friend list of 200 or more people. They update their status at least 2 times in a day and/or check for updates 10 times or more in a single day. Around 14% respondents admitted that they check their Facebook account 10 or more times in a day. On the other side, in response to the questions related to the time spend on Facebook and online activity, more than 50% of responses by people, who have a big friend list, showed that these people use their account in less to moderate manner. This can be said that the size of friend list is not a measure of active use of Facebook since people tend to accept the friend request of persons who are their colleague or acquaintance only. The psychological response to a friend request is either to “oblige” the person or not to let the other person think of you as “arrogant”.

The answers provided by our respondents to another question indicate that most of people share posts which can boost one’s motivation and spread positivity, the posts relevant to the society at large, and also the posts which are lighter in nature and fall under the category of fun stuff. “Motivational posts” was also the option selected by 60% people in response to a question related to the types of posts liked by them. These responses show that many people use Facebook to assure themselves they are part of society and possibly they seek motivation to get rid of the negativity in their minds.

Social and Political Impact:

Facebook is not only popular among individuals, but is also used by organizations to make the people aware of their services. Businesses use it as a good platform to promote their products and services. In 2012, the beauty pageant Miss Sri Lanka Online¹⁰ was organized using Facebook only. Similarly many online events and/or event invitations are being given using Facebook. Government agencies are now using Facebook to reach citizens to know their concerns as well as to make people aware of various social-economic schemes launched by the government. For example, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship under Indian Government launched a scheme called “Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana” (PMKVY) in July 2015. To reach a wider range of people, the ministry has created their official website as well as profile on SNS, including Facebook. Similarly, every government department has their official page on Facebook to let the citizen know about different policies and decisions taken by the authorities concerned. One another example is the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), which aims at providing government services in fast and cost-effective manner. In answer to a question asked in our survey, more than 75% Facebook users agree that it can impact the political structure of a country and make the governance more responsible. Only 6% respondents were against this notion; rest of people preferred to be undecided. In Lok Sabha elections of 2014, almost every political party used the power of Facebook to reach the eligible voters and convey their message to them. Facebook played an important role in shaping the destiny of Indian political system. CNN referred to these elections as “India’s first Social Media Elections”.

Impact on teenagers:

Facebook offers youth an easy means for entertainment and communication with others and that it's important for parents to be aware of the nature of this social website; as might not be a healthy environment for the young. Regarding the optimal age to use Facebook, Children Online.org posted on its 55th Edition Newsletter: “We believe it is always developmentally best to hold the line on Facebook whenever possible to age 15 or 16. The many decisions needed to navigate Facebook safely are a challenge for children and young teens because they do not yet have the skills or experience to make those decisions. Trying to navigate the confusing & often-changing privacy settings, numerous marketing tricks, scams, and social drama that arise from

impulsive communication, all create a challenging atmosphere for still developing young teens. These challenges include harassment, bullying and the tendency to feel uninhibited in front of a screen”.

Like others means of technology; Facebook has a positive and negative impacts on its users. As for positive impact, Facebook is the place where teenagers can develop empathy and the online comments can put a smile on someone’s face and improve their mood, it’s also can give shy children a way to interact and socialize with others. Facebook can also improve child's self-identity through many aspects. A research conducted by Dr. Larry Rosen, a psychology professor at California State University, on 2011, makes it official what some parents already suspected “our kids are getting sort of screwed up when they spend too much time on Facebook”.

Addiction and Time Management: Facebook's algorithm encourages users to spend more time on the platform by continuously offering new content tailored to their preferences. This can lead to social media addiction, where individuals find it difficult to disengage from the platform, negatively impacting their productivity, social life, and mental health.

Privacy and Trust Concerns: Privacy on Facebook has been a major issue, with users often unaware of how their personal information is being used, shared, or sold. The Cambridge Analytica scandal, for instance, revealed how Facebook data was harvested without user consent to influence political campaigns. This has led to a growing distrust of the platform, with people questioning how safe their interactions and personal data are.

Decreased Face-to-Face Interactions: As Facebook allows for constant virtual communication, some users may opt for online interactions over in-person meetings. This shift can weaken the bonds that are traditionally strengthened through face-to-face interactions. Studies have shown that over-reliance on social media can lead to social isolation, reducing opportunities for genuine, deep connections.

Echo Chambers and Polarization: Facebook’s algorithm tends to show users content that aligns with their existing beliefs and opinions, leading to the formation of echo chambers. This creates a polarized environment where people are exposed to limited perspectives, reinforcing their views while

minimizing exposure to differing opinions. This polarization has been linked to increased political division and reduced empathy for opposing viewpoints.

CONCLUSION

Facebook has significantly impacted human interaction, relationships, and overall social dynamics. The platform offers a space where users can connect, communicate, share experiences, and engage with communities. However, while it has brought numerous benefits, its influence on social lives is multifaceted, raising concerns about mental health, privacy, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. While Facebook allows for constant interaction, the quality of these interactions is often questioned. Likes, comments, and shares can create an illusion of meaningful connections, while in reality, the relationships may lack depth. Studies have suggested that reliance on social media for communication can lead to a decline in face-to-face interactions, which are critical for emotional bonding and genuine connection. Facebook fosters an environment where users frequently compare themselves to others based on the curated, idealized content they see. This phenomenon, known as "social comparison," can lead to feelings of inadequacy, envy, and depression. Research indicates that excessive time spent on Facebook is associated with increased feelings of loneliness and decreased overall well-being, as users may feel left out or less successful compared to their peers.

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