

**DIGITAL MEDIA AND CULTURE: THE DIVIDE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL
AND MODERN COMMUNICATION CULTURE**

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Abstract

The research aimed to find out whether social media is reducing the amount of social interaction by users with their peers on a face to face basis and it established that this was the case. The digital social involvement (online) and the drift from traditional social culture of youth were addressed by means of questionnaire. A tailored questionnaire was designed and was completed by Undergraduate students (N=57), 31 males and 26 females chosen from Manipal University Jaipur aged 16 years old and upwards. The study concludes that there is great divide among the traditional communication culture and the modern lifestyle that has negative impacts on traditional social communication.

Keywords:- social networking, Market Research, communication

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Introduction:

The concept of virtual social networking may be effective for a society that is deprived of real social interaction, but will it be really beneficial for a dynamically social society like ours?

There are 143 million social media users in India as on April 2015. 'Social Media in India 2014' report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) International states that usage of social media in rural India has grown by 100 percent during the last one year with 25 million users residing in that belt. The report said the largest segment accessing social media consists of the college going students with 34 percent followed by young men at 27 percent. School-going children constitute 12 percent of the social media users. College-going students and young men still form the 60 percent of the social media users in urban India. The report further stated that 61 percent of these users access social media on their mobile device.

"The fact that almost two-thirds of the users are already accessing social media through their mobile is a promising sign. With the expected increase in mobile traffic the number of users accessing social media on mobile is only bound to increase," the report added.

The exceptional rise in the use of social media by youth can be termed as phenomena, which can overshadow all the aspects of social life. Today the rampant use of social media tool and the over-engagement of youth with this tool, demands scholarly work to focus on the study of new social media with its implications on the gen next with reference to traditional ways of communication.

It is said that culture always pays a price for technology. The media of communication available to a culture are a dominant influence on the formation of the culture's intellectual and social preoccupations. Each medium, like language itself, makes possible a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression, for sensibility. Which, of course, is what McLuhan meant in saying the medium is the message, i.e. in every tool we create; an idea is embedded that goes beyond the function of the thing itself (Neil Postman).

According to Thayer (1968) communication is the interchange of thoughts or information to bring about mutual understanding and confidence or good human relation. Communication is not simply the verbal, explicitly, and international transmission of message, it includes all the processes by which people influence one another.

Communication involves three key areas: speech, language, and pragmatic language. Speech is the expressive production of sounds to produce words and phrases. Language is the understanding and use of words, phrases and grammatical structures to effectively understand and convey messages for a variety of interactions within a variety of contexts and with a variety of people. Pragmatic language refers to the use, purpose, or function of speech and language. Pragmatic language is the use of non-verbal and verbal behaviors of speech and language combined to express and respond to functions such as request for basic needs, request for assistance, protest, and persuade. Non-verbal behaviors include facial expressions, gestures, and body proximity. Verbal behaviors include voice prosody, voice stress, and voice intonation. Verbal behaviors are manipulated to change the meaning and intention of sounds, words and phrases verbally expressed in a social interaction. This pragmatic use of language follows socially mediated rules that allow others to interpret and understand another person's intentions and motives and further enhances the meaning of particular social communication interactions. Social Communication is best understood through knowledge and understanding of a definition of social reciprocity and a definition of communication.

A healthy social communication is the foundation for any peaceful society, nation and world, but the modern means of communication focus on the instantaneous factor rather than the more comprehensive characteristics of communication explained above. This is the cause of concern and intention behind the research to highlight the divide between the two forms of communication.

The time and space compression caused by the convergence of new media and globalization creates a universal cyberspace in which new cultural identity is emerging in different virtual communities. The new cultural identity formed by new media may not change the traditional meaning of cultural identity as a unique product through interaction in a specific group context, which gives members a sense of belonging to the group, but it will directly challenge the traditional attributes of cultural identity, namely, temporality, territoriality, contrastivity, interactivity and multiplicity (Belay, 1996).

The real time interactivity has reached its apex with the advent of social media and encompassing all the aspects of life. There is a urgent need to recognize the relationship between use of social media and social interaction. Prior research has not yet led to an agreement as to the relationship between internet use and social interaction with some research suggesting that that it leads to decreased communication between family members (Kraut, Patterson and Lundmark, 1998) and others that there was little or no relationship between internet use and social interaction (Shklovski, Kiesler and Kraut, 2006).

New digital media has brought human interaction and society to a highly interconnected and complex level, but at the same time challenges the very existence of interpersonal communication in its traditional sense.

Literature Review

Types of Social Media: As you think through all of the options for getting involved in social media they are fall into six general bucks. (Sreekuttan.M.S)

1. Social Networks: Services that allow you to connect with other people of similar interest and background usually they consist of a profile various ways to interact with other users, ability to setup groups, etc. Eg: Facebook, LinkedIn.

2. Bookmarking Sites: Services that allow you to save, organize and manage links to various websites and resources around internet .Most allow you to tag your links to make ease to search and share. Eg: Delicious, StumbleUpon, Getpocket, Evernote.

3. Social News: Services that allow people to post various news items or links to outside articles and then allows its users to “vote” the items. The voting is core social aspect as items that get the most votes are displayed the most prominently. The community decides which item gets seen by more. Eg: Digg, Reddit

4. Media Sharing: Services that allow you to upload and various media such as pictures and videos. Most services have additional social features such as profiles, commenting etc. Eg: Youtube, Flickr, Instagram.

5. Micro Blogging: Services that focus on short updates that are pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive the updates. Eg: Twitter

6. Blog Comments and Forums: Online forums allow members to hold conversations by posting messages. Blog comments are similar except they are attached to blog and usually the discussions centres around the topic of the blog post.

Rebecca Sawyer (1996) noted that in today's society, there is an increasing number of Internet users so new social media has become more popular in daily patterns and routines. People use social media for many reasons. First, the need for connection and interaction with other people is evident. As supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people desire to fulfill a sense of belonging through support from relationships with others. After obtaining physiological and safety needs, people strive to achieve Maslow's third need of belonging. New social media provide this opportunity where people can communicate with others and belong to different networks via virtual communities on the Internet. In relation to interacting with others online, people use social media to gain knowledge and learn about different opinions and perspectives of issues, topics, and events. Most importantly, new social media is used for socializing; it is a form of media that allows people to participate in conversations and online dialogue without being face-to-face with others.

There have been negative findings which indicated that extensive use of the internet for communication was associated with decreased communication among family members and a reduction in the size of one's social circle (Kraut et al, 1998). Other researchers have reached more neutral conclusions that there was little or no relationship between internet use and social interaction (Shklovski et al, 2006) and that social networking sites did not replace face to face communication (Coyle et al, 2008).

Kujath (2011) noted that an early study by Kraut et al (1998) found that when used primarily for communication purpose, extensive use of internet was associated with decreased communication among family members within a household. Kraut et al (1998) also found that extensive use of the internet led to a reduction in the size of one's social circle and increases in depression and loneliness. Kraut et al (1998) attributed these negative effects to the substitution of online relationships for stronger offline relationships. In a follow-up study using the same group of participants, Kraut et al. (2002) found that

more frequent internet use of the internet (specifically email) was associated with increased contact with local and distant social partners. Furthermore, Kraut et al (2002) found that frequent use among adults was associated with more face to face communication with family and closer feelings toward extended family and friends.

It was noted by Kujath (2011) that these conflicting findings had led to controversy over the effects of computer-mediated communication on interpersonal relationships. Several studies had suggested that these effects were largely dependent on the goals of computer-mediated communication e.g. Kraut et al, (1998) found that when computer-mediated communication was used as a substitute, the effects on interpersonal relationships were negative. On the other hand, Kraut et al, (2002) found that when used as a compliment to face to face interaction then computer mediated communication facilitated the maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

The objective of the study by Kujath (2011) was to determine whether previously found effects of computer-mediated communication on interpersonal relationships generalise specifically to the social networking site, Facebook and MySpace and to understand the extent to which those sites are used to create new relationships rather than to maintain prior existing face to face relationships. The study also examined the extent to which some users depend more on Facebook and MySpace as a substitute for face to face interaction.

Miller, Parsons and Lifer (2010) reported on the results of a field study in which undergraduate students were questioned about their use of social networking sites and the appropriateness of the content that they post. The data was collected directly from students who used MySpace and Facebook. Students were asked about how often they visited the sites and the amount of time they spent during each visit. Focus groups were conducted with students who were active users of the sites. These focus groups were made up of students from a variety of disciplines, all attending a small private university in the Midwest United States. The sample for the study had 165 undergraduate students attending the same university as those from the focus group.

The results of Miller et al's (2010) study found that the vast majority (88.5%) admitted to visiting the sites at least once a day. Perhaps more interestingly 60% of the students reported that they visited the sites multiple times a day. Although this may lead to the assumption that students are spending hours on these sites, the results paint a slightly different picture. In fact the students reported that their individual visits tended to be short, 60% less than 10 minutes and 35.2% between 10 and 30 minutes (Miller et al, 2010). Nevertheless, this research did not examine the impact of internet use on face to face communication. However, it does provide useful data on the frequency and duration of

visits by the respondents and it also established that students used the sites primarily to maintain and expand their social network (Miller et al, 2010).

Coyle et al (2008) conducted a survey and two focus groups to learn about college students' communication habits, including social networking. They designed a questionnaire that included open-ended questions regarding situations in which someone is more likely to choose one method of communication over another. Questions were asked such as how many social networking accounts respondents had and on average how many times a day did they log onto a social networking site and also the who, what, why and when of their communication via social networking sites. The data was collected from 68 undergraduates who were of ages from 18-22. Results showed that on average, people visit their accounts about three times per day and that young adult Americans were not generally communicating with unknown others who share similar interests via these social networking sites but rather they were using them as a form of entertainment and a way to stay connected with people they already knew (Coyle et al, 2008).

Coyle et al (2008) noted that their survey supported the findings of others that the main purpose of social networking was to keep in touch with friends. Their findings also indicated that social networking sites were used for trivial communications with friends, both close and non-close, and that they are used to maintain friendships but not as a central form of socialising. In addition, they found that social networking was convenient for retaining contact when time and distance were issues but that it did not replace voice calls and face to face communication (Coyle et al, 2008).

Hypothesis:

Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional social communication as well as disrupts interpersonal face to face communication and provokes misunderstanding.

Aims and objectives of the present research

Prior research had found that there was little to no relationship between internet use and social interaction (Coyle et al, 2008). The massive increase in the use of social networking media in recent years may have changed this relationship. The proposed research project aims to find out whether social networking media is reducing the amount of social interaction by users with the other people on a face to face basis and the research has the objective of establishing the reasons why this may be so. Existing research has primarily been based on undergraduate students of Manipal University Jaipur, India. The phenomenal growth in the use of social media means that prior research may quickly become out of date. Earlier users of new technologies may have characteristics which are less representative of the wider population. For example, they may be more computer

literate than the average person. As more and more people begin to use social media, the users become more representative of the general population. The current study focuses on the use of Social media and as to whether social media usage has a negative effect on traditional communication.

The current study tries to contribute to filling these gaps of knowledge by examining the impact of social media as decline in regular social activities or hurdle in routine interpersonal or group communication along with exciting misunderstanding and miscommunication that is difficult to settle.

Methods

Materials:

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher incorporating questions that were aimed to reveal the internet usage of participants (see appendix). Questions were also included to establish the decline in students' social interaction and attendance in social activities. It was designed to highlight practical problems related to Social Media Communication.

Participants:

The participants were undergraduate students from Manipal University Jaipur, India aged 16 years old and upwards. Questionnaires were completed by (N=57) 31 males and 26 females.

Procedure:

The questionnaire was set up on Google Docs and a link to the questionnaire was shared with email contacts and an invitation to participate. The results were collated on Google Docs and further analyzed. The main ethical issue was that the identity of participants must be protected. Their right to confidentiality in regard to their personal information disclosed in the course of the research was respected. The individual names and Social Media addresses of participants were not recorded in the course of the research. The questionnaire was completely confidential and there were no questions which required the disclosure of participant's names.

The use of a tailored questionnaire was regarded as the most appropriate manner to conduct research in this area. It had the advantage of complete confidentiality of the responses of the participants and so was more likely to elicit candid replies. The questionnaire format was also suitable for statistical analysis. Another advantage was that it was a low cost approach to gathering information and it was a speedy way to get responses within a limited time frame.

Results

An analysis of the responses to the questionnaire supports the hypothesis that Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional social communication. A majority of respondents agreed that they spend more time communicating on Social Media. They also agreed that the time they spent on Social Media reduced the amount of time they spent communicating with family and relatives, face to face. A detailed analysis of responses to the individual questions revealed the following:

If social networking sites did not exist then I would spend more time face to face with my friends/relatives

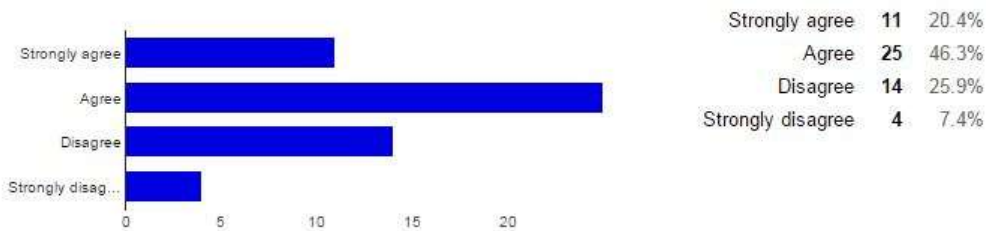


Fig.1 If social networking sites did not exist then I would spend more time face to face with my friends/relatives.

A 66.7% majority of participants replied that they either “agree” (46.3%) or “strongly agree” (20.4%) that they spend more time communicating on Social Media than face to face. 33.3% said they either “disagree” (25.9%) or “strongly disagree” (7.4%).

The time I spend on social media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life



Fig.2: The time I spend on Social Media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life.

A huge majority of social media users (85.2%) agree (60.4 %) or strongly agree (20.8%) that social media has negative effect on other activities as compared 38.9% to those who disagree (13.2%) or strongly disagree (5.7%).

There is lot of miscommunication & misunderstanding while communicating on social media

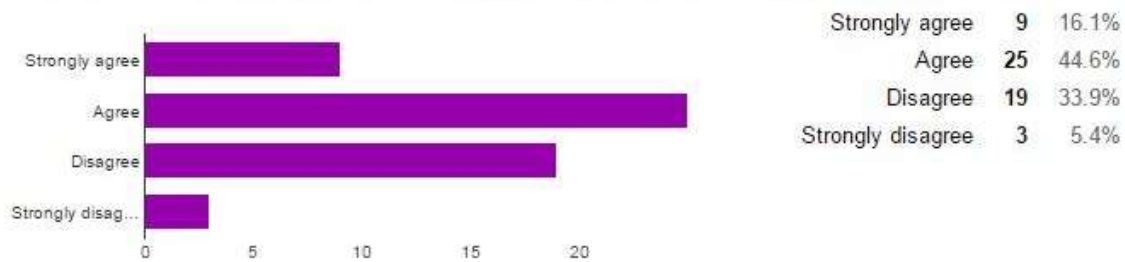


Fig.3: There is lot of miscommunication & misunderstanding while communicating on social media.

A majority of users (60.7%) agree (44.6 %) or strongly agree (16.1%) that social media communication can cause lot of miscommunication and misunderstanding whereas (39.3%)are those who disagree (33.9%) or strongly disagree (5.4%).

It is difficult to fix the misunderstanding on social media

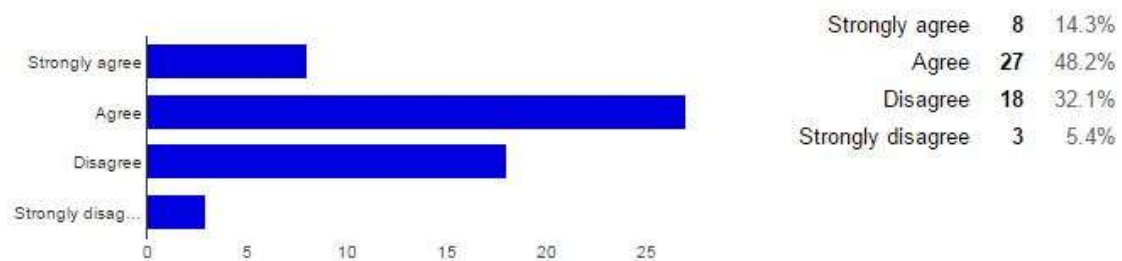


Fig.4: It is difficult to fix the misunderstanding on social media.

A majority of users (62.5%) agree (48.2%) or strongly agree (14.3%) that it is difficult to fix the misunderstanding caused in social media communication whereas (37.5%) are those who disagree (32.1%) or strongly disagree (5.4%).

When I am with my friends, face to face, I check social media for updates

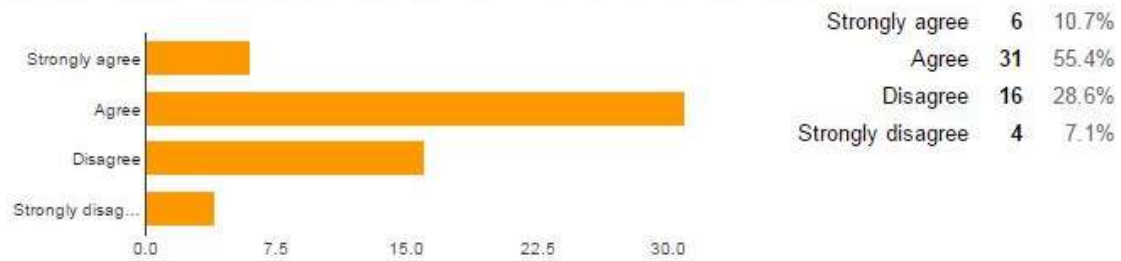


Fig.5: When I am with friends, face to face, I sometimes check Social Media for updates
 66.1% of respondents said they either “agree” (55.4 %) or “strongly agree” (10.7%) and 35.7% said they either “disagree” (28.6%) or “strongly disagree” (7.1%).

When I am with my friends, face to face, it bothers me if they check their social media for updates

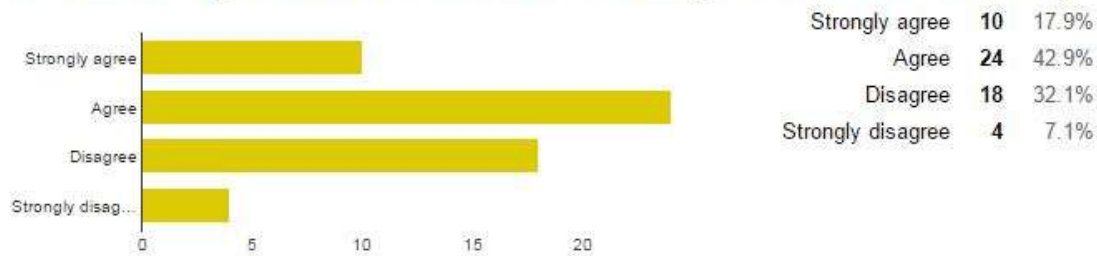


Fig.6: When I am with my friends, face to face, it bothers me if they check their Social Media for updates
 60.8% said they either “agree” (42.9%) or “strongly agree” (17.9%) and 39.7% said they either “disagree” (28.6%) or “strongly disagree” (7.1%).

The social media has reduced my face to face communication with relatives

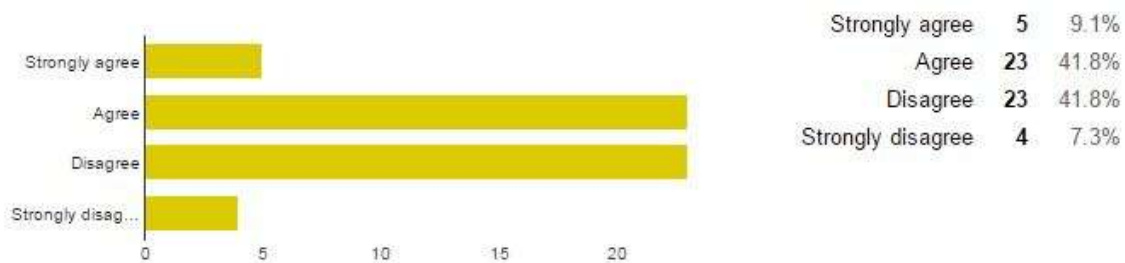


Fig.7: The social media has reduces my face to face communication with relatives.

There was a fairly even split in replies to this question with 50.9% saying they either “agree” (41.8%) or “strongly agree” (9.1%) and 49.1% said they either “disagree” (41.8%) or “strongly disagree” (7.3%).

Discussion

The current research focuses on the use of the Social Media by students and as to whether Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional communication. The research also addresses gaps in existing knowledge regarding the use of social networking sites and its limitations.

The main hypothesis of the study was that Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional, face to face communication. A majority of participants in the current survey confirmed that that they would spend more time communicating face to face with my friends/relatives if social media did not exist (Figure 1) and also that they felt that the time they spend on Social Media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life (Figure 2). This would suggest that to some extent Social Media communication has substituted for face to face contacts and so has a negative effect in that respect. This would concur with the findings reported by (Kujath, 2011) who noted that previous studies had claimed that social networking sites were used as a substitute for face to face interaction, resulting in deteriorating relationship quality and decreased intimacy among its users.

A majority of respondents 60.7% believed that the social media communication causes lot of misunderstanding and miscommunication whereas more than 62% users think it is difficult to resolve the misunderstanding or miscommunication roused by social media (Fig. 3 & Fig.4).

Even when face to face contacts are taking place, Social Media can have a negative effect by interrupting communication. 66.1% of respondents to the current survey admitted to sometimes checking Social Media for updates even when they were with friends. This habit of their friends checking Social Media when they were with them was bothersome to 60.8% of respondents (Fig.5 & Fig.6)

Again, one may have anticipated that Social Media would have been used to arrange face to face meetings with friends. However, a large majority of 85.9% of respondents in the current research disagreed that they use Social Media to arrange face to face meetings with their friends (Figure 4). Presumably, face to face meetings are arranged more often by other means, such as telephone voice calls and texts.

The main hypothesis of the study was that Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional, face to face communication was validated by the responses to the questionnaire. A majority of participants in the current survey confirmed that that they would spend more time communicating face to face with my friends/relatives if social media did not exist(Figure 1) and also that they felt that the time they spend on Social Media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life (Figure 2)

Conclusions

The current paper focuses on the use of Social Media by University students and as to whether Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional, face to face communication. This research has helped infilling these gaps of knowledge by examining the impact of social media as reduction in regular social activities or hurdle in routine interpersonal or group communication along with arousing misunderstanding and miscommunication that is difficult to settle. The main hypothesis of the study was that Social Media usage has a negative effect on traditional, face to face communication was validated by the responses to the questionnaire. A majority of participants in the current survey confirmed that that they would spend more time communicating face to face with my friends/relatives if social media did not exist and also that they felt that the time they spend on Social Media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life. This would suggest that to some extent Social Media communication has substituted for face to face contacts and so has a negative effect in that respect. This would concur with the findings reported by (Kujath, 2011) who noted that previous studies had claimed that social networking sites were used as a substitute for face to face interaction, resulting in deteriorating relationship quality and decreased intimacy among its users.

Limitations of the current research

Several limitations were noted during the course of the research. The main questionnaire was compiled by the researcher who does not have the necessary specialized training. This means that the results lack scientific reliability. It would have been preferable if the questionnaire had been devised by a person with the appropriate expertise and if it had been psychometrically tested. A more direct comparison of results could have been made with previous research if an existing questionnaire from an earlier survey had been used rather than a new one. Participants were asked to estimate the amount of time they spend on Social Media and the number of their visits. These estimates could have been unintentionally inaccurate to a significant degree which would undermine the reliability of the findings. It would have been preferable to have asked participants to keep a time diary for Social Media usage over a period of time.

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Appendix

Social Interaction and Social Media Questionnaire:

Social Interaction and Social Media

This study is concerned with the use of social media (Whats App, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Please answer each section as honestly as you can. Do not spend too long thinking about each question as there are no right or wrong answers. Any information that you give will remain strictly confidential. You are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. I hope you find this interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

1. **What is your age?**

Check all that apply.

- 16-18
- 19-21
- 22 and above

2. **What is your gender?**

Check all that apply.

- Male
- Female

3. **Do you use Social Media?**

Check all that apply.

- Yes
- No

4. **How do you access Social media?**

Check all that apply.

- only by computer (laptop, desktop, iPad)
- only by mobile phone
- by both computer and mobile phone

5. **How many times a day on average do you access Social Media?**

Check all that apply.

- 1 to 3 times
- 4 to 6 times
- 7 to 9 times
- 10 times or more

6. **What is your average length of each visit to Social media?**

Check all that apply.

- less than 15 minutes
- 16 to 30 minutes
- 31 to 60 minutes
- 1 to 2 hours
- more than 2 hours

7. **My family members complain about my over involvement with social media**

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. **I have more friends on social media than in real life**

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. **I spend more time communicating with friends on social media than face to face**

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. **The social media has reduced my face to face communication with relatives**

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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11. I share many things on social media which I don't express in face to face communication

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. There is lot of miscommunication & misunderstanding while communicating on social media

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

13. It is difficult to fix the misunderstanding on social media

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. When I am with my friends, face to face, I check social media for updates

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. I am busy with my social media updates in any social gathering

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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16. When I am with my friends, face to face, it bothers me if they check their social media for updates

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. It has been long time I have attended any funeral

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. It has been long time I have visited any sick relative/friend

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19. If social networking sites did not exist then I would spend more time face to face with my friends/relatives

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. I feel disappointed if my social media status or new photos get no 'likes' from my friends

Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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21. **The time I spend on social media sometimes has a negative effect on other activities, such as study and family life**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

22. **I use social media to arrange face to face meetings with my friends**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

23. **I sometimes log on to social media because I feel lonely**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. **When I view the social media pages of my friends, I often feel that their social lives are better than mine**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

25. **I sometimes spend too much time on social media**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

26. **I sometimes feel that social media brings out addictive tendencies in me**
Check all that apply.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree