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A study on social media usage among young adults in Bangalore

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Abstract

Social media is a dynamic, evolving medium. Young adults across the world have adapted to the world of social media and use it to communicate with the world. Bangalore is the IT hub of India and attracts young adults from all across the country who come here for work or for study. Young adults in Bangalore have mobile access, are connected to the internet and use social media applications. But how do they use these ever-changing social media applications? What kind of content do they actively seek? This quantitative study seeks to answer these questions which would then help advertisers, marketers and other communicators to design communication strategies that appeal to young adults on social media.

Keywords: social media usage, young adults, social media preference

1. Introduction

Social media is the brave new frontier when it comes to communication technologies. Click, post, share, talk, react and connect with the world. No wonder, young adults across the globe use this vibrant and viral medium for expression and mediated interpersonal interactions. In Bangalore, the city that is called as the Information Technology hub of India, young adults are connected to the web, more so, social media through their laptops and mobile phones with data packs that are moderately priced and extremely affordable. They use the medium to share information about the mundane to the most important aspects of their lives. In fact, social media has become an all-pervasive part of their everyday life. In this scenario, it is important to understand the social media choices of young adults in Bangalore and how they use these social media applications in their lives.

2. Review of literature

Giunchiglia, Fausto & Zeni, Mattia & Gobbi, Elisa & Bignotti, Enrico & Bison, Ivano (2018) ^[1] found that social media usage has a negative effect on the academic performance of students and smartphone addiction leads to the unlikeliness of achieving distinctive academic performance among students. It distracts students from academics and may have an effect on their productivity.

Kavita (2015) ^[2] says that social media distracts Indian students especially those belonging to the teenage category and deflects them towards non-educational actions like chatting and searching non-educational content. In fact, social media is used more for entertainment rather than educational purposes by students.

Pyasi, Piyush & Kr Saxena, Nitin & Karnik, Pranay. (2015) ^[4] while studying social media's role in influencing youngsters in India to take up social service oriented activities found that social media content influences youth to take up socially relevant activities. Social media persuades youth to take decisions regarding pursuing socially relevant activities.

Manjunatha S. (2013) ^[3] while studying the usage of social networking sites among college going youth found that young people use social media to maintain existing friends and contacts, find new friends and for business networking. They choose their social media friends based on their personal likeness and have average to fairly intimate relationship with their online friends. The major reasons for social media usage are messaging, chatting and media sharing.

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Sinha, Arpan Sinha, Yadav, Rajesh Kumar and Kanodia, Rekha (2016) [5] found that social media has become a part of the daily life of youngsters because it enables speedy, affordable communication. On the positive side, social media helps widen the friends circle, creates empathetic communication, faster interactions and helps youngsters get in touch with the outside world. On the negative side, social media generally wastes the time of youngsters, also there are issues like online privacy, online predators, poor spelling and grammar and decreased productivity among young people because of social media.

3. Theoretical framework

This quantitative study to understand social media usage among young adults in Bangalore is based on the uses and gratifications approach to media. In this approach, audiences are perceived to be active in their usage of media. They decide what to do with media and media content. They use it as deemed necessary and actively seek the benefits as well as the rewards from the media. Media use is governed by the individual's desires and needs. Every person uses media to satisfy specific needs. These needs can be personal identity, integration and social interaction, entertainment, excitement, education and so on. This study is aimed to find out how young adults in Bangalore use social media and what kind of needs this media satisfies.

4. Research methodology

4.1 Statement of the problem

Social media has become an integral part of the lives of young adults in Bangalore, the IT capital of India. It is important to understand the social media usage patterns of young adults in order to identify their preferred social media applications, how they use this ever-evolving medium and what kind of content young adults actively seek from social media. A study of this kind would help gain a better understanding of young people's activities on social media. The study also would help marketers and advertisers gain insights into the type of content that would appeal to a young audience in urban India.

4.2 Objectives of the study

- To identify the preferred social media applications of young adults in Bangalore
- To find out the reasons why young adults in Bangalore use social media
- To find out the kind of content that young adults actively seek on social media.
- To find if age and gender of respondents have a significant effect on social media usage.

4.3 Hypothesis

H_0^1 There is no significant association between age and usage of social media

H_0^2 There is no significant association between gender and usage of social media

H_0^3 There is no significant association between age and frequency of access to social media.

4.4 Research design

This quantitative study uses a questionnaire to understand the social media usage patterns among young adults in Bangalore. The questionnaire which included a series of closed-ended questions was administered to young adults

aged between the ages of 15-29 years who are residents of Bangalore and who have access to the internet. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique wherein only residents of Bangalore who were aged between 15-29 years and who had internet access were administered the questionnaire. The sample size for the research was 200 respondents. After eliminating sampling errors, the final number of respondents totalled to 189.

4.5 Limitations of the study

The sample size is restricted to 189 respondents. The study was restricted to a small geographical area. The duration of the study was limited to a period of one month in the first quarter of the year 2019.

5. Findings and interpretations

This quantitative study to understand the social media usage patterns of young adults used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The total number of samples that were analysed was 189 respondents of which 102 were female and 87 were male. The data collected for the study were analysed using percentiles and the interpretations are given below.

5.1 Social media usage by young adults in Bangalore

S.No.	Social Media Use	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	187	98.9
2	No	2	1.1

Majority of the respondents use social media (98.9%). Young adults in Bangalore use social media.

5.2 Social media applications used by young adults in Bangalore

S.No.	Social media App	Frequency	Percentage
1	Facebook	161	85.2
2	Instagram	149	78.8
3	Twitter	48	25.4
4	Whatsapp	183	96.8
5	YouTube	141	74.6
6	Others	18	9.5

The most popular social media application among young adults in Bangalore is the messaging application, Whatsapp with 96.8% of the respondents using the same. This is followed by Facebook which is used by 85.2% of the respondents. The photo-sharing app, Instagram (78.8%) follows closely as youngsters now show a preference to share the everyday aspects of their lives through images. In the others category (9.5%), the applications mentioned by young adults were Snapchat, Discord, Pinterest and Tumblr.

5.3 Frequency of use

S.No.	Social Media App	Frequency	Percentage
1	Everyday	184	98.4
2	Once or Twice a week	3	1.6
3	Once in two weeks	0	0
4	Once a month	0	0
5	Less than once a month	0	0

Majority of the respondents use social media everyday (98.4%). This shows that social media is an integral part of

the lives of young adults in Bangalore very similar to other youth-related activities like studying or working or socializing. It also shows the enormous amount of leverage that online applications have on young adults in Bangalore.

5.4 Purpose of use

S. No	Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
1	To connect with friends/socializing	150	79.4
2	To be update with news and current events	150	79.4
3	To express/share opinions	89	47.1
4	For entertainment	147	77.8
5	Support a cause	54	28.6
6	To fill spare time	102	54
7	To feel fulfilled	0	0
8	Others	3	1.6

Social media is primarily used to keep up-to-date with news and current events that are happening around them, be it in the personal lives of others or in terms of the larger worldview; and also used to connect with friends and socialize (79.4%). Social media is also used for entertainment (77.8%) and to fill spare time (54%). In the others category, the reason given was that sometimes social media is the only means of communication when other forms of communication are unavailable. This says a lot about young adults dependency on social media.

5.5 Preferred format on social media

S.No.	Format	Frequency	Percentage
1	Videos	144	76.2
2	Photos	168	88.9
3	Text	120	63.5
4	Blogposts	87	46
5	Podcasts	18	9.5
6	Infographics	45	23.8
7	Others	3	1.6

Majority of the young adults prefer to view photos on social media (88.9%). The other preferred formats for content on social media are videos (76.2%) and text (63.5%). The others category includes links to pages outside Facebook.

5.8 Results of the Chi-square showing the association between age of the respondents and the frequency of access of social media

Age	Frequency of Social Media Use					
	Everyday	Once/Twice a Week	Once in Two Weeks	Once a Month	Less than once a month	Never
15-20	108					
21-25	61					
26-30	15	3				2
Total	189					
Chi-square value	43.398 ^a					
df	4					
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000					

The chi-square value pertaining to the association between age and usage of social media is 43.398. As $p < 0.001$, it can be inferred that there is a significant association between

5.6 Preferred content on social media

S.No.	Content Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Humorous posts	159	84.1
2	Satirical memes	96	50.8
3	Personal posts from family/friends	101	53.4
4	Inspirational messages	87	46
5	Political posts	96	50.8
6	Socially relevant posts	87	46
7	Sports	42	22.2
8	Travel	92	48.7
9	Tips and DIY	87	46
10	Others	32	11.6

Young adults enjoy viewing humorous posts (84.1%) on Facebook. This corroborates with the findings that Facebook is seen as a means of entertainment (Table 4.4). They also like to see personal posts from family and friends. This again corroborates with the findings that Facebook is used to connect with friends/socializing. Satirical memes and political posts (50.8%) are also equally popular among young adults on Facebook. Travel posts (48.7%), socially relevant posts (46%) and DIY posts are equally popular. The others category (11.6%) includes posts on books, reading, beauty, lifestyle, recipes, science, astrology, history and celebrity news.

5.7 Results of the Chi-square showing the association between age of the respondents and the usage of social media

Age	Usage of Social Media	
	Yes	No
15-20	108	0
21-25	61	0
26-30	18	2
Total	189	
Chi-square value	17.081	
df	2	
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000	

The chi-square value pertaining to the association between age and usage of social media is 17.081. As $p < 0.001$, it can be inferred that there is a significant association between age and usage of social media. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no association between age and usage of social media is rejected.

age and frequency of social media. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no association between age and frequency of social media access is rejected.

5.9 Results of the Chi-square showing the association between gender of the respondents and the usage of social media

Gender	Usage of Social Media	
	Yes	No
Male	87	0
Female	100	2
Total	189	
Chi-square value	1.724 ^a	
df	1	
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.189	

Since the p-value (0.189) is greater than the chosen significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), it is concluded that there is not enough evidence to suggest an association between gender and usage of social media. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents and the usage of social media is accepted.

6. Findings

Most of the young adults in Bangalore use social media and almost all of them access social media every day. It is an integral part of their lives. Whatsapp is the most popular social media messaging service among young adults. Facebook is also popular among young adults and Instagram is slowly catching up with Facebook in terms of popularity among young adults.

Social media is primarily used to keep up-to-date with news and current events that are happening around them, be it in the personal lives of others or in terms of the larger worldview; and also used to connect with friends and socialize. Social media is also used for entertainment and to fill spare time.

Majority of the young adults prefer to view photos videos and texts on social media. This shows that social media is primarily viewed as a visual medium and accounts for the popularity of Instagram, a photo/video sharing app.

Humour seems to be popular among young adults on Facebook as Facebook is primarily seen as an entertainment medium. Personal posts are also preferred as young adults use Facebook to connect with friends and for socializing. Satirical memes and political posts are also popular among young adults.

The study indicates that there is a significant association between age and usage of social media and also that there is a significant association between age and frequency of social media use. However, there is no significant association between gender and usage of social media.

7. Conclusion

Social media is a part of the everyday life of young adults in an IT-centric city like Bangalore. They use it as a means to keep themselves updated and connect with friends. It is an important medium for entertainment and socializing. It would also be an ideal medium for connecting with young adults, be it for marketing, advertising, politics or for even social causes. Young adults prefer humour on social media and hence humorous messages using primarily visual modes of communication are a sure way to engage young adults on social media.

8. Suggestions

The research may be conducted with a larger sample size in other geographical locations. The urban and rural divide in

social media usage can also be another area that can be explored. Social media holds endless possibilities for research into the lives of young adults who use this medium actively as a part of their lives.

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