

## EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA ON YOUTH

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### Abstract

Today most of the individuals, mainly teenagers, are mostly and always immersed in the social networking site (SNS) usage. Association of youth to these global online communities is an alarming prospect both for parents and educators and an intriguing area for social science research. Have we ever thought of what they might be doing there? This paper surveyed students, mainly social media users and how it affects them, in Technique Polytechnic Institute, Hooghly, India. A self structured questionnaire was prepared and primary data were collected through questionnaire. The data collection was done in an online survey manner. Some research questions were formed to analyze these data. The collected data were analyzed using percentages and graph representations and discussed in accordance with the objectives of the study. It was found that majority of the respondents assemble to social media because they are not getting attention from their family, leading to depression and loneliness. To get rid of this isolation they seek attention from outside, dragging themselves to social media. The study reveals that Facebook is the most popular SNSs among the students. It was also found in the study that they are quite aware of the abuse of these social media still they gather here to communicate with friends. The study also lightens the fact that SNSs are actually affecting their communication skills.

**Keywords:** Social media, Teenagers, Isolation, Depression

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## 1. Introduction

The current tools of teenage communication go by a peculiar set of names. Wall Posts, Status Updates, Activity Feeds, Thumbs Ups, and Profiles are some of the ways that youth today communicate with one another. These terms are results of social network sites or applications, such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype and Whatsapp, etc. Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) or social media have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. Use of social media in large number is almost a common affair for youngsters. Studies also support this fact - for example – in a national survey in 2009 it was found that within 3 years (i.e. from 2006 to 2009) the percentage of online teenagers increased from 55% to 73%.

Association of Youth to these global online communities is an alarming prospect both for parents and educators and an intriguing area for social science research. Many articles concluded different perceptions about this. For example, educators and parents in the United States face difficult dilemma concerning students and social media. Many intellectuals suggest that students learn in new ways using social media and hence educators should embrace these new platforms for education. Youngsters are among the first to have grown up entirely surrounded by communication technologies. They are also in a period of rapid mental escalation and maturation.

## 2. Background of the Study

### 2.1. Defining 'Youth'

As Large (2005) notes, it is difficult to define categories such as children, adolescents, and young adults in concrete terms, here we draw on the terms youth, youngster, teenagers, and adolescents identically throughout the text. According to National studies, teenagers are between the ages of 12–17. However, Ito et al. (2009) observed that terms such as children, adolescents, and young adults are socially and culturally constructed labels. According to them, children as less than 13 years of age, teenagers and adolescents as between 13–18, and young adults as 19–30 years old. Given these wider definitional criteria of youth as a developmental category, this paper considers youth between the ages of 12–18.

### 2.2. Social Network Sites: A Perception

A **social network site (SNS)** is a platform to build social relations among people who share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. Social network sites are web-based services that permit persons to form a public profile, to create a list of users with whom to share connections and views. Most social network services provide means for users to interact over the Internet. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Social network sites integrate new information and communication tools such as mobile connectivity, photo/video sharing and blogging. These sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, interests with people in their network.

Social networking sites (SNS) not only allow individuals to meet strangers, but also they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. Social networking has become a practice of the daily life for a mounting number of people. The rapid acceptance of social network sites by teenagers in all over the world raises some important questions.

### 2.3. The Problem Statement

According to a research by Kadala J. T (2011), students, these days are always very busy with their smart phones, laptops and tablets. Given access to the Internet, they will spend considerable time chatting, checking their emails, their Facebook profile, their Whatsapp account, updating their Twitter accounts, and it does not happen only once a day. It is speculated that an average youth spend about 6-7 hours on the internet daily, some even do all night browsing. The obvious question that comes up in our mind is – “Why do teenagers assemble to these sites?” This paper tries to explore the answer of the above question and examines if social networking site and social media usage have any effect on the psychology of youth.

### 3. Methodology

The method used for data collection for this study was the questionnaire method. This was because of the nature of information required and the form of analysis to be conducted. A 20-question structured questionnaire was designed and ran to students from the institution, Technique Polytechnic Institution of Diploma learning situated in Hooghly, West Bengal, India. The data collection was done in an online survey manner using Facebook. The questionnaires were prepared in ambiguity to enable the student fill them truthfully without hampering their privacy. Out of 125 responses, 115 which were adequately filled are considered for this study.

### 3.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

RQ1. Which of the social media is mostly used by students?

RQ2. How much time do students spend on the SNSs daily?

RQ3. What are they expressing on SNS?

RQ4. Do students use the SNSs for their academic assignments?

RQ5. Does SNS affect their academic achievements?

RQ6. Does SNS affect youths' social life, chiefly communication?

RQ7. Do youth activities in SNS influence their psychology?

RQ8. Why do teenagers assemble to these sites?

### 3.2. Data Analysis

The **Table 1** delivers below a brief account of the basic information of the respondents covered under the study. Here the gender wise distribution of the respondents was shown, which shows that 91 numbers (i.e. 79.13 %) are male respondents and 24 numbers (i.e. 20.87 %) are female respondents, who were found using SNSs .

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	91	79.13
Female	24	20.87
TOTAL	115	100

The **Table 2** presents the age wise distribution of respondents. The data shows that majority of respondents fall between the age group of 19-21(i.e. 61.74%) and 22+ (i.e. 20%), whereas only 2 (i.e. 1.74%) of respondents belong to the age group of 8-12, who used SNSs.

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
8-12	2	1.74

13-18	19	16.52
19-21	71	61.74
22+	23	20.00
TOTAL	115	100

In **Figure 1**, we present the most commonly used SNSs among the students of TPI. The data depicts that 114 respondents are using Facebook, 81 respondents are using Whatsapp, 28 respondents are using Twitter and 33 respondents are using Skype. For enhanced judgment we allowed one respondents to choose more than one option in the given questionnaire.

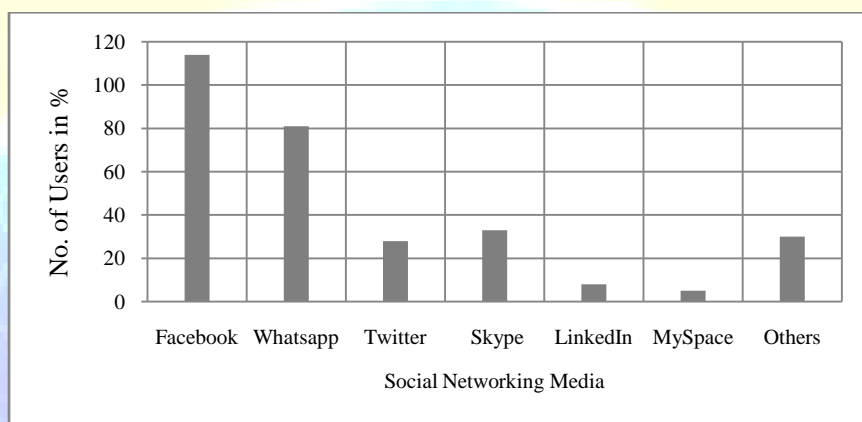


Figure 1: Image showing SNSs used by Respondents

**Table 3** presents the age wise distribution of respondents. The data shows that majority of respondents fall between the time span of 15-30 minutes, 31-60 minutes and 2-5 hours (i.e. 20.87%, 28.70%, 26.96% respectively), whereas only 9 (i.e. 7.83%) of respondents belong to the group of >15 minutes, who used SNSs.

Time Span	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
>15 minutes	9	7.83
15-30 minutes	24	20.87
31-60 minutes	33	28.70
2-5 hours	31	26.96
<5 hours	18	15.65
TOTAL	115	100

**Table 4** shows the detail of friends' number of the respondents of the study on Social Networking Sites. The data depicts that 7 respondents (6.09%) have less than 50 friends on SNSs, 10 respondents (i.e. 8.70%) have 51-100 friends, 14 respondents (i.e. 33.33%) have 100-2500 friends and majority of respondents - 84 respondents (i.e. 73.04%) have more than 250 friends on Social Networking Sites.

Friends	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
11-50	7	6.09
51-100	10	8.70
101-250	14	12.17
250+	84	73.04
TOTAL	115	100

The respondents were asked why they used Social Networking Sites. **Figure 2** reveals that 100 respondents used SNSs to Chat with Friends, 69 respondents used SNSs to Study, 69 respondents used SNSs to Entertainment, 57 respondents used to make new friends, 29 respondents used to participating in discussion, 25 respondents used to Playing Games and 31 respondents used SNSs for other purposes, like sharing Photos and Videos, Instant Messaging.

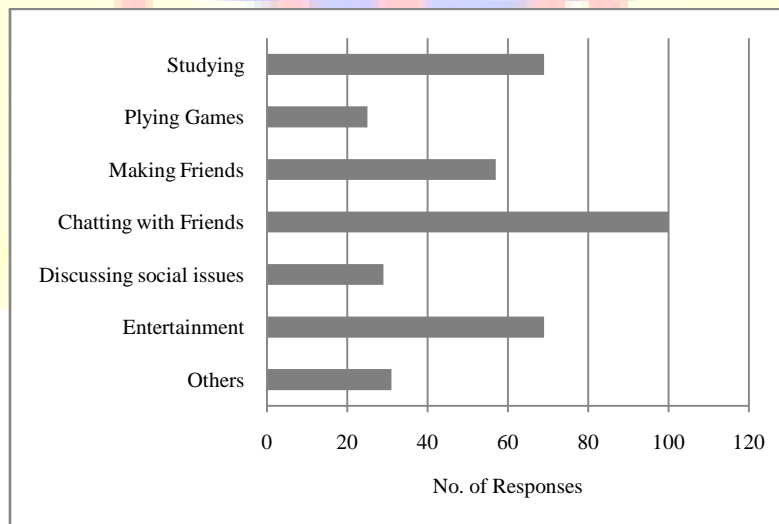


Figure 2: Image showing Purpose of using SNSs

The respondents were asked whether these SNSs are affecting their academics. The responses were noted in **Figure 3** where 86 out of 115 respondents (i.e. 74.78%) used SNSs for their academic assignments. **Table 5** gives an elucidation of the same, i.e. how SNSs are hampering their academics. It explicates that majority of respondents (77 i.e. 66.96) admitted that uses of SNSs affecting their studies seriously.

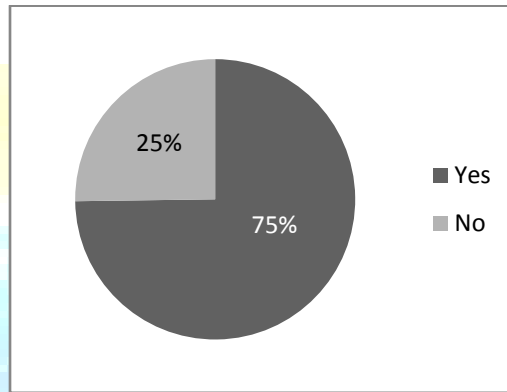


Figure 3: Image showing SNS for Studies

Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Seriously affecting	77	66.96
Slightly affecting	1	0.87
No impact	25	21.74
Slightly helping	8	6.96
Seriously helping	4	3.48
TOTAL	115	100

The respondents were also asked whether these SNSs are affecting their communication skills. The responses were noted in **Figure 4** where 65 out of 115 respondents (i.e. 56.52%) thought that use of SNSs hampered their communicating skills.

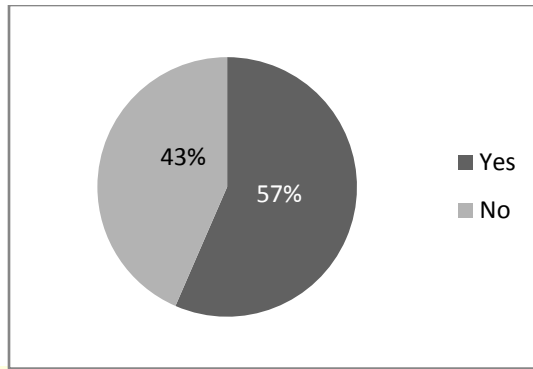


Figure 4: Image showing Effecting Communication

**Figure 5** shows out of 115 respondents, (33+29=) 62 (i.e. 53.91%) respondents thought that these SNSs were to some extent have an effect on face to face communication or replaces most face to face communication.

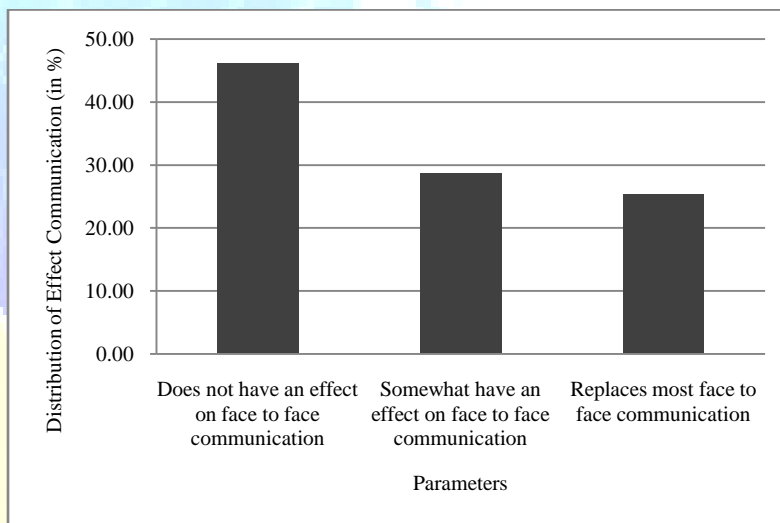


Figure 5: Image showing Distribution of Effect on Communication

**Table 6** shows that respondents used these sites when they feel alone. The data shows that 57 respondents (i.e. 49.57%) use SNSs because they feel lonely and 53 respondents (i.e. 46.09%) use these sites when they are happy.



**Table 6: Table showing Distribution of State of Mind**

State of Mind	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Happy	53	46.09
Emotional	3	2.61
Sad	2	1.74
Alone	57	49.57
TOTAL	115	100

The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the potential abuse of these SNSs. The responses were noted in **Figure 6** where 79 out of 115 respondents (i.e. 68.70%) were aware of the fact. On the other hand, 36 out of 115 respondents (i.e. 31.30%) were unaware of the same.

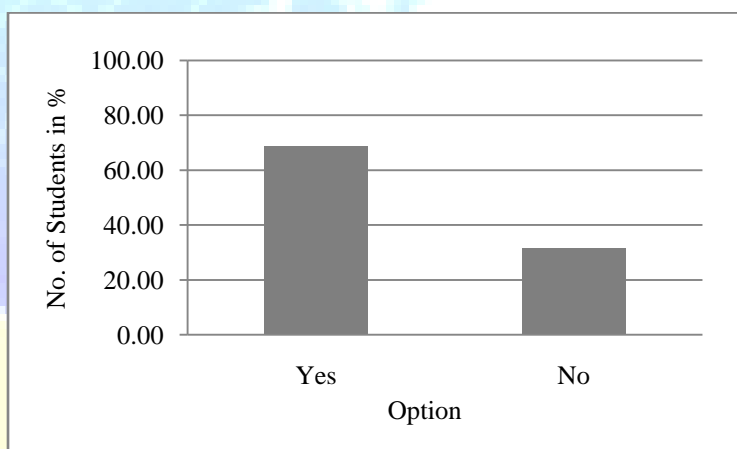


Figure 6: Image showing Aware about abuse of SNSs

It was also asked whether respondents will continue to use these SNSs and the responses were summarized in **Table 7** as mentioned below. Majority of the respondents will continue to use these SNSs though they are aware of the abuse of the same.

**Table 7: Table showing Distribution of Future use of SNSs**

Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	107	93.04
No	8	6.96
TOTAL	115	100

### 3.3. Major findings of the study

The major findings of our study are as follows:

1. In the above conducted study it was found that 79.13 % of respondents were male respondents and 20.87 % of respondents were female respondents.
2. The study found that majority of the respondents i.e. 61.74 % were between the age group of 19-21 years.
3. The Facebook was the most popular SNSs used by all categories of respondents followed by Whatsapp.
4. The main purpose of using SNSs was found Chatting with Friends by 86.96 % of the respondents followed by Entertainment and Studying (i.e. 60%).
5. The study emphasized that SNSs can be a good platform for finding new friends.
6. The result portrays that the use of SNSs is time killing.
7. The study found that majority of the respondents i.e. 74.78% thinks that social media are affecting their academic achievements.
8. The study also reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 56.52% thinks that social media are damaging real communication.
9. A significant finding of the study was majority of the respondents i.e. 49.57% uses these sites because they feel lonely, followed by the number of respondents (i.e. 46.09%) who share happiness with fellow users. In short, teenagers are not getting proper attention from their family so they are sharing their thoughts and feelings with fellow users who face the same problem. To get rid of this isolation they seek attention from outside, which in turn, drag them to SNSs.
10. Results of the conducted study also lighten the fact that though teenagers are conscious about the potential abuse of the SNSs, they will continue to gather here to carry out their activities.

### 4. Acknowledgement

At first we would thank the respondents who answered the questionnaires without their help it would not be possible to draw a conclusion. We sincerely thank the R&D cell of the Institute for the correspondences. We also thank the management of the Institute for their encouragement.

## 5. Conclusion

The present study was focused on the effect of Social Networking Sites on the youth of Technique Polytechnic Institute, Hooghly, India. SNSs provide the various ways to the students to interact with each other. They updated themselves by surfing profile of each other, posting messages, videos and photos, share professional and personal information at international online platform. In the present scenario, SNSs have become one of the largest online platforms in the world for sharing real time information.

But the fact that SNSs affect individuals psychologically in a bad way is found in the literature analysis and consequence of this study. A relation between SNSs and loneliness arises from the necessity of humans who needs to communicate with each other to go on their lives. Individuals who cannot communicate may be abstracted from the society and experience problems. Individuals who are shy and who choose to be alone try to communicate and convey their feelings and thoughts to other people through internet because they experience difficulties in communicating face-to-face. Social support has an optimistic magnitude on individuals' not sinking into depression and not feeling lonely. Since users of SNSs usually abstract themselves from their social relations, they will spend more time on SNSs. Use of these SNSs is an important problem for the society. Ignoring this problem and not looking for solution offers mean standing by bigger troubles that will arise in future. Parents should know the psychological effects of SNSs on youths in order to fight against it.

So we need to focus on the decent use of these SNSs so that it facilitates our society in a right way and the youth can play an important role because SNSs is a boon and curse both, for the Indian society. In one hand, it acts as a helping hand by averting youngsters from drowning in the cave of isolation. On the other side, it offers isolation by detaching us from our dear ones. These SNSs act as platforms that become danger for Indian heritage and culture.

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