



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2347-6710

# IJIRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in  
**SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY**



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 12, Issue 8, August 2023

**ISSN** INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

Impact Factor: 8.423

 9940 572 462

 6381 907 438

 [ijirset@gmail.com](mailto:ijirset@gmail.com)

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# A Study on Social Media Platforms and Its Influence on Youth Audience

Dr. S. TAMILARASI<sup>1</sup>, G.SATHISH<sup>2</sup>

Asst. Professor and Head, Department of Visual Communication, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli,  
Tamilnadu, India

Asst. Professor, Department of Visual Communication, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu, India

**ABSTRACT:** Social media the most recent form of media, have gained astounding global growth. It has become a part of everyone's life and considered as a vehicle of instant communication. With instant updates and live feeds, the digital form of storytelling has caught the attention of the youth. As social media is one of the fastest modes of communication it has huge impact in shaping the personal lifestyles of youth. The present study focuses on the influence of social media platforms among the youth in the utility of the processing the instant communication. The respondents are youth under the age group of 17- 23yrs. The theory taken in this study is Uses and Gratification theory. Online survey is administered for data collection. Purposive sampling method was chosen to reach the actual respondents and also to minimize error. Social media platforms were mainly accessed through smartphones among the youth. The study revealed the reason behind this was instant communication, news update; webcasting, accessibility and approachability to the news were also found to be easy while accessing social media platforms. The social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter are mainly accessed by the youth for sharing information. Due to the status quo among their peers and self- gratification they access the social networking sites. The youth who involve in social networks sites lack concentration in studies, physical activities and disturbed sleep that leads to social isolation. In order to get public attention, the youth mainly engage in accessing social media platforms. They also suggested that spreading of fake news is more due to social media platforms and also the question of privacy while sharing the information. The study also concluded that the social media platforms act as a place for youth social connection and for accessing more information than ever.

**KEYWORDS:** Social networking sites, Smart phones, Instant communication, social isolation, Fake information, Public attention, Credibility, Self-gratification.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of social media, the world has become a global village. The extensive use of social media in India has been on the rise among the new generation youths. Social media an interactive medium enables people to communicate digitally and it is differentiated from conventional media which allows the users to both access and produce content. It is an array of applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and websites through which people share the information and appreciate major events that happens around them. These social media platforms have elevated the level of digital media and share the information in front of a real challenge in how to make these content suitable for the digital age over the smart phones. Through social media platforms, users connect with other people within seconds, share their ideas, and provide comments on different area of interest and issues. In today's world, use of social media has become an integral part of everyday life of human being. As youth are immature, they are becoming victims of social media networking sites that results in cyberbullying. This impacts young people mental and physical health and also leads to self -isolation and self-harm. Due to the lack of confidentiality and security on the social media platforms, it's possible for misusing sensitive information and also increase the chances of spreading fake information.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A limited researches have attempted to explain the social media platforms and its influence among the youth audience.

P. U. Rani and Padmalosani, (2019) stated that social media platform enables one to share or connect with others. It helps a person from one side of the earth to communicate and discuss things with a person in the other side of the earth.



This is not just a form of entertainment; it is also effective to obtain online social support, especially to access to similar peer communities.

Ahn (2010) founded that the social networking sites have direct influence on the behaviour of people, especially on youngsters. There are many benefits associated with these sites but at the same time the most disturbing scenario is that young people are seen to be lonelier in their own world and they lack how to interact with society. Due to this, they lose their connection with their own family as well as they lose their communication skills. The youth are highly addicted to social media sites as they spend a lot of time on the internet to update status on these social sites, select a picture to change their profile picture, post on walls and even whatever they make. They make their standard of popularity by their “Likes”, the more they have “Likes” they consider that they are more popular in people.

Jain et al. (2012) explained that youth takes active participation and raises their voices to express their opinions and views on social issues that are being discussed on the social networking sites. He also founded that the youth reciprocates to these events but do not take up any discussions beyond the web and forget about them once they sign off. Thereby, social networking sites prove to be a boon to the youth in terms of spreading awareness about these issues that arise.

Social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube, as well as video chat platforms such as Google Hangout and Zoom, have seen an increase in daily usage like never before (Koeze & Popper, 2020). Along with this, the inability for youth audience to go to in-person classrooms and spend time with friends outside of the household has resulted in more and more younger generations turning to social media as a way to keep in contact with their friends and keep up with their curriculum and responsibilities.

O’Reilly et al., (2018) pointed that internet is a great place to learn new information, but it is also associated with potential risk of exposure towards harmful and damaging activities and content. One of the major problems is cyberbullying and “trolling.” Adolescents are exposed to the threat of harassment at the hands of anonymous individuals through online mode.

Meena PS, Mittal PK, Solanki RK (2012) stated that higher levels of social media use among the youth are associated with lower levels of participation in sports activity, physical activity, less happiness, and more socioemotional difficulties. The youths who predominantly use social media to connect with peers have positive emotional outcomes compared with those who are connected face to face.

The key points elucidated from the review of literature is summarized as follows: The social media platforms are an effective information sharing tool especially for similar peer communities. The youth are highly addicted to social media sites and they spend a lot of time on the internet to update status on these social sites. With active participation in social media platforms youth raises their voices to express their opinions and views on social issues that are being discussed on these social networking sites. The intense use of social media among the youth resulted in lower participation in physical activity and also lack of concentration in curriculums and increased the risk of cyber bullying and trolling. Based on the literature review, this study tries to determine the impact of social media platforms among the so called youth.

### Objectives of the study

1. To identify the various social media platforms accessed by youth.
2. Is there any significant relationship between accessing of social media platforms and distraction among the youth respondent.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A sample of 200 youth of 17-24 years old were selected in the city of Tiruchirappalli, since social media is new medium and this city has a diverse youth audience as it is an important educational hub. Purposive random sampling techniques was chosen to conduct the survey. Frequency test and Correlation were administered in the study to show the number of occurrences of each response, relationship between variables and it also helps in analyzing the results and drawing conclusions.



IV. DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

The study reveals the fact that the preferred social media platform among the youth is Facebook (34%) and they too are active users of Instagram (27%) and Whatsapp (20%). Youtube (19%) and Twitter were also accessed to a merging percentage among the respondents surveyed. There are a variety of possible advantages connected with the use of social media, which include opportunities for entertainment, discovery of personality and artistic expression. The most specific advantage of social media use among the youth is social interaction and these helps them to feel at home. It also provide resources for some young people to obtain online social support, especially to access to similar peer communities. Growing trends in internet connectivity it is easier, faster and more convenient to connect and interact through social media platforms. These new audiences do not sit in front of Television but they spent majority of time in social media where they encounter with new information.

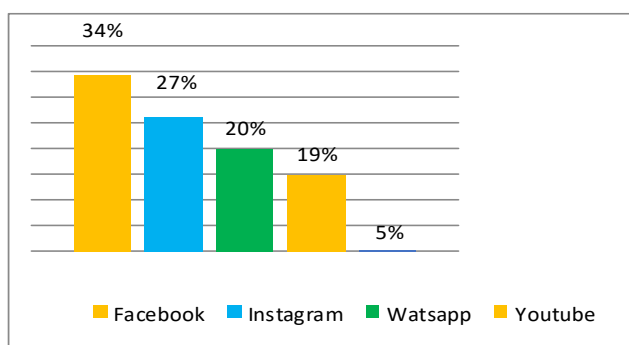


Figure 1: Social media platforms accessed by youth.

More than half percent of the youth respondents (56%) very strongly agree that they access social media for self-gratification and around (20 %) strongly agree (15%) more or less strongly agree for accessing social media for self – gratification. A very few respondents not at all agree with social media providing self - gratification. According to uses and gratifications theory (UGT), people use media because they derive specific gratifications from media consumption. Interaction on social media can satisfy people’s need. The youth perceive gratifications through the use of the friend-networking site type of social media, such as Facebook. Meeting new people, that is, using social media to make new friends or initiate new connections, is another important gratification derived from online social networking. It allows youth not only to manage existing social relationships but also to build new ones. Entertainment is another gratification sought for and provided by using social media, allowing the youth by filling up spare time, taking a break, and having fun (Ellison et al., 2006).

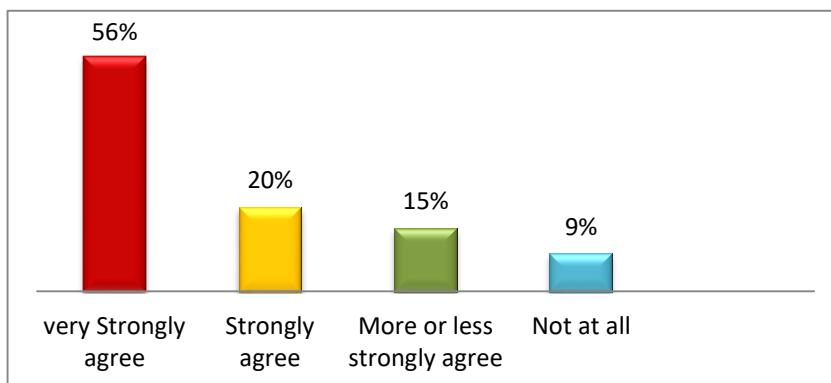


Figure 2: Accessing social media for self-gratification by youth.

More than one fourth (35%) of the youth respondent feel that social networking sites also spreads fake news. 18% of the youth do not feel that the social network sites spread fake news. The flexibility in terms of freedom and power to present the angle of the news story provided in production and filing the news stories makes the youth to think about the possibility of spreading fake news. As digital media can be moderated by an individual, the destiny of a news story becomes unpredictable. Since the news comes without confirming and verifying as it was sent by





ordinary people the spreading of fake news is possible. At the same time the instantaneous and accessibility makes the youth to feel that the social network sites do not spread fake information.

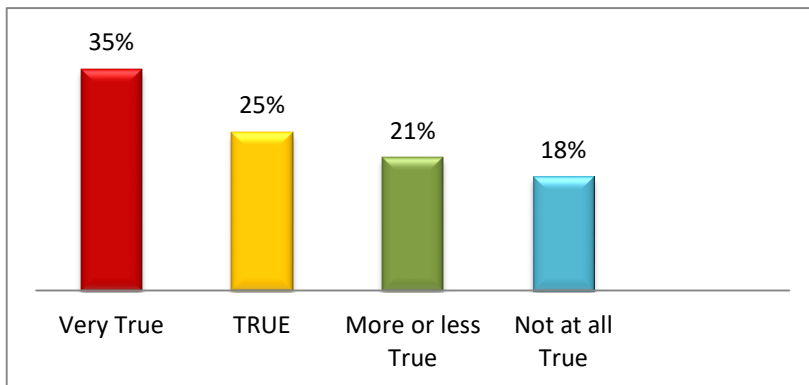


Figure 3: Social media platforms spread fake News.

Around (39%) of the youth respondent feel happy on accessing the trolling in social media whereas (21%) of them are eager to watch more trolling. Less than one fourth of respondent (24%) feel sorry while they access the trolling that they come across in social media and around (19%) of the youth respondent feel disappointed on accessing the trolling. A troll is created in social media platforms by an individual with the intention to create conflicts and to provoke emotional responses out of people. Trolling occur anywhere, where people can freely post their thoughts and opinions. As Social media does not have any restrictions in creation of content the youth access for their happiness due to self-gratification and self-isolation they get on while accessing social media.

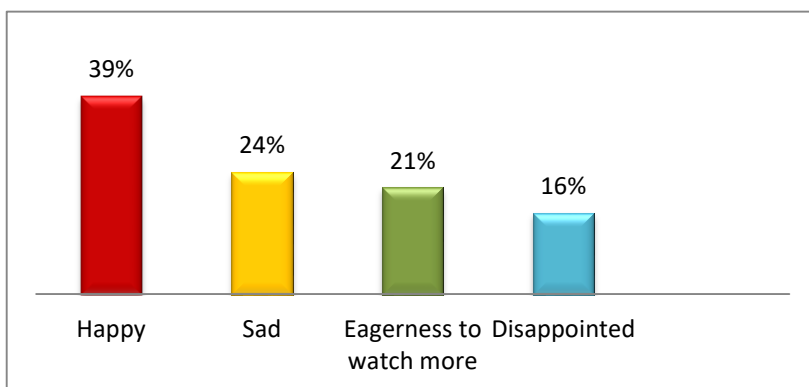


Figure 4: Feel towards Trolling in social media by youth

Less than half percent of the respondents (40%) post on social media for getting public attention and (21%) of them always and only sometimes post on social media for getting public attention and around (18%) rarely post on social media for gaining public attention. Social media exposure has become an important channel for publics to actively express their opinions. With the support of mobile and web-based technologies, social media create high interaction among communities. As the youth always hang around with smartphone the involvement of posting information and opinions that is of highly attractive and controversial messages that in turn provokes others is quite high, which leads them to keep on posting such information's for gaining public attention. The possibility of getting likes, comments also considered to be fashionable among the so called youth.

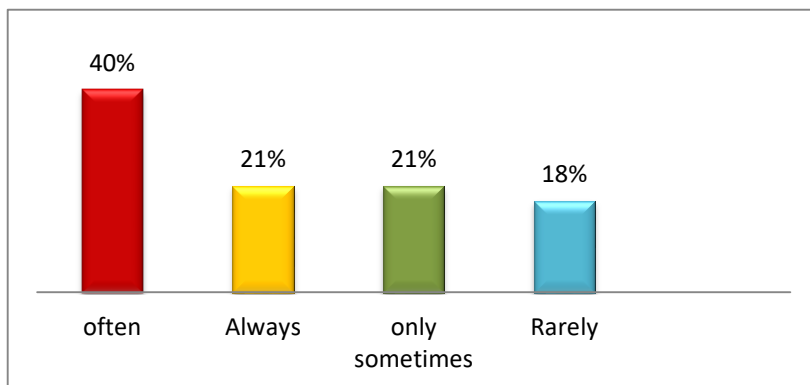


Figure 4: Posting on Social media platforms to getting public attention.

**Objective 2:** Is there any significant relationship between accessing of social media platforms and distraction among the youth respondent.

In order to find out the significant relationship between number of hours accessing social media and distraction among the youth Pearson's correlation was administered. The Pearson's correlation was done with the following variables

1. Number of hours accessing social media
2. Lack of concentration in academics
3. Lack of physical activity
4. Disturbed sleep because of accessing of social media.

Table: 1

Correlation matrix- Relationship between accessing of social media platforms and distraction among the youth

	1	2	3	4
1	1			
2	.248**	1		
3	.175**	-	1	
4	.118**	.177**	.174**	1

\*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 levels

The variable number of hours accessing social media positively correlates with lack of concentration in academics ( $r = .248, p = .01, N = 200$ ), lack of physical activity ( $r = .175, p = .01, N = 200$ ), disturbed sleep ( $r = .118, p = .01, N = 200$ ). The variable disturbed sleep because of accessing social media also positively correlates with lack of concentration in academics ( $r = .177, p = .01, N = 200$ ) lack of physical activity ( $r = .174, p = .01, N = 200$ ). As the technology is growing the social media has become the routine for each and every person, youth are seen addicted with these technology every day. Social networking sites are very popular among the youth and the majority of them stated that they are active members of social networks. As social media is famous for multitasking and multimedia, this makes the youth to spend more screen time ending with digital eye strain. Additionally when youth are using technology like computers, video games, Television, they generally aren't exercising. The overuse of digital devices links to decrease in physical activity, less concentration in academics and fitness levels.

**Findings**

1. Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and YouTube were identified as the major social networking site among youth. Majority of respondents strongly agree that they access social media for self- gratification and they post on social

media for getting public attention. They also feel that social networking sites do spread fake news and they do feel happy and excited on seeing the trolls in social media.

2. There is also a significant relationship between number of hours accessing social media and distraction. The youth who spend more hours accessing social media lacks concentration in academics, physical activity and also have disturbed sleep.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Social networking has drastically changed the way people interact with their friends and family members. Smartphones form the backbone of social media which in turn had a great effect on dissemination of information and the way they operate. The technological power of the social media is tremendous and it is quite a learning tool for all especially youth. These technological gadgets have made the youth life very comfortable. Social media's methods of instantaneous communication have brought new expectations. A culture of instant gratification has taught the youth that there is no need to wait to receive information. The research clearly identifies that the young audience preferred social networking sites. The restriction less characteristics of social media paves the way for spreading fake news.

When using these social media sites, it is quite important to know and understand the privacy risks involved in it. Youth should use their time wisely on social media for better social networking instead of informal chats and posts in WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The youths must be clear on the purpose of using social media and how long they are on online and make it beneficial to their personal and social networking purpose.

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