



## Purpose of using social networking sites by adolescents

<sup>1</sup> Deepa Mourya, <sup>2</sup> Khwairakpam Sharmila

<sup>1</sup> M.Sc. Student, Department of Human Development & Family Studies School for Home Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development & Family Studies School for Home Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

### Abstract

Adolescents are today's most profuse users of Social Networking Sites. Many of their experiences and opportunities will be shaped by their engagement with SNSs. Thus, the study entitled "Purpose of using social networking sites by adolescents" aimed at studying the various purpose of using SNSs by adolescents across gender. Total 120 students equally distributed over gender who were randomly selected from 2 schools of Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh. A self-structured questionnaire was used in this study. The study reveals that majority of the adolescents uses SNSs for sharing messages and chatting with friends were in the age of 15-17 years. Social acceptance topped the reasons for sharing personal information on SNSs by both boys and girls. Results also revealed that majority of the boys uses less than 1 hour a day, while girls uses for maximum duration i.e. 3-6 hours daily. However, there exist no significant differences on the purpose of using Social Networking Sites across gender and age.

**Keywords:** social networking sites, social connection, social acceptance, communication

### 1. Introduction

Using social networking sites is among the most common activity of today's children. Such sites offer today's children a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years. For this reason, it is important that parents become aware of the nature of social media sites, given that not all of them are healthy environments for children.

Engaging in various forms of social networking sites is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Social media sites such as Facebook and Myspace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates and people with shared interests. During the last 5 years, the number of preadolescents and children using such sites has increased dramatically. According to a recent poll, 22 percent of teenagers log on to their favourite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of children log on to a social media site more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25 percent use them for social media, 54 percent use them for texting, and 24 percent use them for instant messaging. Thus, the present study was planned with the following objective:

1. To ascertain the purpose and gender differences in using Social Networking Sites among adolescents.

### 2. Materials and methods

#### 2.1 Locale of the study

The sample for the present study was drawn from Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh, India.

#### 2.2 Sample

Two senior secondary schools were randomly selected from Lucknow city for which the principals granted permission to draw sample from their school. The teacher was approached to interact with the students. Thus, the final sample comprised of 120 adolescents aged 13-17 Years equally distributed over gender.

#### 2.3 Tools

##### Self-Structured Questionnaire

A Self-Structured Questionnaire was used to assess the purpose and gender differences on using social networking sites.

### 3. Results & Discussion

SNSs use stands for how an individual makes sense of his life through cognitive and effective evaluations (Diener, Lucas, Oishi, 2005) [2]. It is common knowledge that people share their problems with others in times of stress and the support thus obtained has significant benefit on that person's health and well-being (e.g. Uchino, Cacioppo & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996) [10]. Infact, sharing events and discussing things with others in helpful in building one's social resources thereby allowing development of positive soci

Data pertaining to purpose of using Social Networking Sites presented in Table 1 revealed that majority (79.6 %) of the respondents' uses social networking sites for sharing messages and chatting with friends (68.6%). However, sixty one per cent of the respondents' reported that they use for work related to study; besides 48.8 per cent of the respondents used for sharing photos and videos and to stay up to date (45.5 %).

Further probing into the data revealed that 36.4 per cent of the respondents used Social Networking Sites for playing games while 33.1 per cent respondents used for making new friends online and to fill up spare time respectively. Twenty six per cent of the respondents reported using Social Networking Sites just because their friends are already using them. The findings contradicts the findings of Bhola & Mahakud (2014) who accounted that the top three purposes for which SNS were used were chatting, making friends and news with 52%, 37% and 15% user preference respectively. Jan *et al* (2015)<sup>[4]</sup> also examined the factors influencing the Malaysian Muslim users to adopt social networking sites to justify the adoption of Social Networking Sites like Facebook, twitter and My Space. Result reveals that there are several factors that may cause the adoption of social networking sites such as social, technological, informational and even educational factors particularly among the Muslim users in Malaysia. As Malaysia is a multiracial country, underlying caused for this adoption may not be same for the specific race of the country. Table 2 depicts Gender differentials as per purpose of using Social Networking Sites. In both boys and girls majority (66.7% and 88.3% respectively) of them uses social networking sites for sharing messages. In case of boys 66.7 per cent boys uses for study related work followed by purpose of staying in touch with friends (61.7%), chatting (63.3%), sharing photos and videos (45.0%). 38.3 per cent of the respondents reported that they uses only to stay up to date while 33.3 per cent uses to play games. However, 31.7 per cent boys were interested in making new friends though social networking sites and 30.0 per cent uses to fill up spare time. Because friends are already on them was the reason cited by 25.0 per cent of respondents for using social networking sites. Among girls chatting was the purpose cited by 75.0 per cent respondents for using SNSs next to sharing messages, followed by study related work (56.7%), stay up to date (53.3%), stay in touch (50.0 %). 40.0 per cent of the girls reported using social networking sites to play games, besides 36.7 per cent uses to fill up spare time and make new friends (35.0 %). Because friends are already on them (26.7%) is also the last reasons cited by girls as well. Similarly Wang *et al* (2016)<sup>[11]</sup> who conducted a study on modelling self-disclosure in Social Networking Sites by developing a machine learning model to measure self-disclosure in Social Networking Sites to understand the context where it is higher or lower also found that women are self-disclosure more than men. People with a stronger desire to manage impressions self-disclose less. Network size was also found to be negatively associated and self-disclosure while tie strength and network density is positively associated.

Srivastava (2015)<sup>[18]</sup> examined the effect of facebook use on life satisfaction and subjective happiness of college students of Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh and also to broaden current knowledge in the area by examining these variables through gender and age. Happiness was measured by using subjective happiness scale and life satisfaction was measured by using life satisfaction scale. Results showed that female were found to be happier and fully satisfied with life than male, also older students were happier and satisfied than younger students. Positive and significant correlation was observed between facebook usage, life satisfaction and happiness of older age

group college students. Bazarova and Choi (2014)<sup>[1]</sup> investigated how people express fewer negative emotions in network-visible communication (i.e., status updates and posts on others' timelines) than in private messages, while expression of positive emotions in status updates is often strategic, serving to manage a profile owner's self-presentation. People also tend to share more intimate information in private messages than in network-visible Facebook communication, although this result was found in relation to self-disclosure overall, not just sharing of emotions.

### **H<sub>02</sub> - There is no significant difference on the purpose and gender in using Social Networking Sites among adolescents.**

The data was further analyzed to see the gender and age differentials on the purpose of using Social Networking Sites. Results revealed that there exist no significant differences on the purpose of using Social Networking Sites across gender and age (Table 3).

It could be envisaged from Table 4 that majority (80.2%) of the respondents share their personal information on Social Networking Sites. Further probing into gender differences on reasons for sharing personal information on social networking sites revealed that majority (83.3%) of girls seeking social acceptance followed by 20 per cent who share to get attention from their online friends, and to get emotional support (35.0 %). Data also revealed that 30 per cent girls share their personal information to disconnect themselves from family and open oneself to their online friends respectively. Similarly majority (69.4 %) of the boys also share their personal information to get social acceptance in social networking sites, followed by sharing to get attention (37.0 %), emotional support (33.1 %), and to open oneself in social networking sites (27.3%), sharing photos and videos (53.3%),

Table 5 denotes the reasons for sharing personal information on Social Networking Sites by adolescent boys and girls. Social acceptance topped the reasons for sharing personal information on SNSs by both boys (56.7%) and girls (83.3%). Among boys it was followed by getting attention (30.0%) and emotional support (31.7%) as reasons for sharing their personal information. 25.0 per cent cited that they share their personal information so that they could open themselves to their online friends while 15.0 per cent boys stated that they share so that they could feel relief after sharing their emotions. Disconnect from family (6.7%) was the last reason given by boys. Similar trends was found in girls as well, social acceptance was followed by getting attention (40.0%) was the reason for sharing personal information on social networking sites. 35.0 per cent reported that they seek emotional support by sharing their personal information. 30.0 per cent girls cited disconnect from family and open oneself respectively as the reasons for sharing their personal information. The study bear resemblance with the findings of the study by Qian and Scott (2007) who conducted a study on anonymity and self-disclosure on weblogs and tried to provide a holistic framework by identifying the antecedents of SNS usage for people who lack meaningful relationships in their lives and compensate for it by using SNS. For such individuals SNS offers a gateway to a world where they can express their feelings without inhibition, receive social and emotional

support they crave and thereby increase their sense of well-being. Disclosing personal information is also easier due to anonymity and the absence of any kind of criticism along with feeling of being in control.

The result is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Kaur and Kiran jyoti (2015) [6] who investigated how Social Networking Sites has provided a platform for the online users to share their emotions, opinions and ideas with each other on some significant matter either positively or negatively. Predicting the gender identity and the emotional state of the online users on the basis of text/comment written by him/her is a most challenging task. The result reveals that various emotion detection techniques to predict the exact behaviour of the gender on the basis of emotions expressed on Social Networking Sites like Twitter, Facebook, etc. and describe the importance of emotions expressed in Social media in different domains. Various phases of emotion mining such as Emotion Extraction, Emotion Analysis, Emotion Detection and Emotion Classification have been presented with their methods. Still the optimized Framework to evaluate the text to predict the emotions on the basis of exact behaviour of the gender has to be set up. Wise (2013) [12] explores adolescents' experiences of self-disclosing on facebook when distressed. Facebook provides adolescents with multiple opportunities to self-disclose information about themselves, one of the most prominent ones being a status update. This qualitative study expanded on existing research related to adolescent self-disclosure on Facebook by exploring ten adolescents' experiences of self-disclosing on a Facebook status when upset or distressed. Using thematic analysis, prominent themes emerged which included the decision-making process in making such a post, concerns of privacy, impacts on peer relationships, perceptions and feelings of others, sense of community and support systems. Four out of five of the participants who did post statuses on Facebook when distressed discussed other people's perceptions and feelings as a determining factor for times when they were distressed and made the decision not to post. The closer the friends were, the more trust adolescents exhibited in them. Moreover, majority of adolescents put more trust in closer friends with less willing to tell their parents about contacts with Facebook friends, the parents need to be actively concerned their adolescents on Facebook use. The number of every type of Facebook friends differed. By contrasting these numbers in each category, 472 respondents reported having every category of Facebook friends (Tsai, 2013) [9].

Table 6 depicts the gender differences on reasons for sharing personal information on social networking sites. It is apparent from the results that girls usually share their personal information more compared to boys for every reasons such as social acceptance, disconnect from family, emotional support, open oneself, get attention or feel relief after sharing. However, statistically highly significant differences appeared in social acceptance, disconnect from family and feeling relief after sharing their emotions.

Table 7 highlights gender differentials in duration of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Results revealed that majority (60.0 %) of the boys uses less than one hour a day, followed by 21.7 per cent who uses 1-3 hours a day. Sixteen

per cent boys stated that they use once in a week while 8.3 per cent uses only fortnightly. Only 3.3 per cent boys reported of using for maximum duration i.e. 3-6 hours daily. Whereas in case of girls major proportion (38.3 %) of them uses for maximum duration i.e. 3-6 hours daily followed by 1-3 hours daily by 30.0 per cent girls, less than one hour a day by 16.7 per cent and 11.7 per cent girls uses once in a week. Only 3.3 per cent girls' uses fortnightly. Thus the result clearly depicts that it was more of girls who uses social networking sites for longer duration as compared to boys from the selected samples. In contrasts to the findings Jubayer (2013) [5] reveals that twenty-seven percent of the teenagers of Bangladesh indicated they are online more than 10 hours per week, while 23 percent of the respondents are online 8 to 10 hours a week and 26 percent are online 5 to 7 hours per week. Half of the respondents are online and using Facebook on a fairly regular basis. It would appear that majority of the teenagers surveyed are spending a great deal of time on Facebook.

Further probing into the age differentials on duration of using social networking sites showed that major proportion (46.2%) of younger adolescents (13-15 years) reported for using less than one hour a day, followed by 3-6 hours a day by 23.1 per cent younger adolescents and 15.4 per cent uses 1-3 hours and once in a week respectively. While in case of older adolescents (15-17 years) major proportion (30.9 %) of the respondents uses for 1-3 hours a day, followed by using less than one hour (27.2 %). 19.8 per cent adolescents reported of using 3-6hours a day while 13.6 per cent uses once in a week and only 5.8 per cent of them uses fortnightly (Table 8).

#### 4. Tables and Figures

**Table 1:** Per cent distribution of respondents on the purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Purpose of using SNSs	Frequency	%
Sharing message	93	(76.9)
Chatting	83	(68.6)
Photos & videos sharing	59	(48.8)
Study related work	74	(61.2)
Playing games	44	(36.4)
Making new friends	40	(33.1)
To Stay in touch with friends	67	(55.4)
Stay up to date	55	(45.5)
Because friends are already on them	31	(25.6)
To fill up spare time	40	(33.1)

**Table 2:** Gender differentials as per purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Purpose of using SNSs	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
Sharing message	40 (66.7)	53 (88.3)
Chatting	38 (63.3)	45 (75.0)
Photos & videos sharing	27 (45.0)	32 (53.3)
Study related work	40 (66.7)	34 (56.7)
Playing games	20 (33.3)	24 (40.0)
Making new friends	19 (31.7)	21 (35.0)
Stay in touch	37 (61.7)	30 (50.0)
Stay up to date	23 (38.3)	32 (53.3)
Because friends are already on them	15 (25.0)	16 (26.7)
To fill up spare time	18 (30.0)	22 (36.7)

Multiple Responses

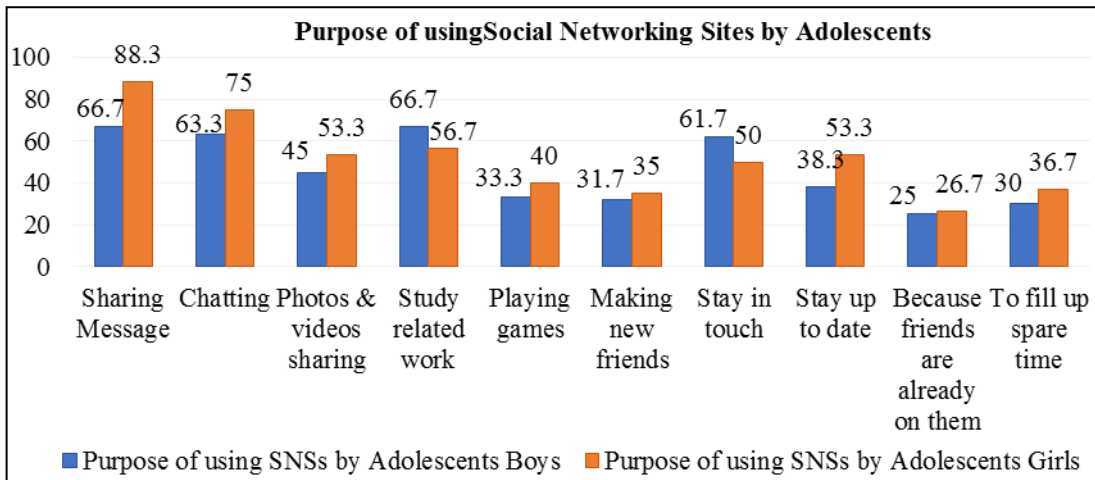


Fig 1: Gender differentials as per purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Table 3: Gender and age differences (Mean±SD) of respondents on the purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Purpose of using social networking sites	Boys (Mean±SD)	Girls (Mean±SD)	t	p-value
	4.61±2.99	5.27±2.98	1.15	.28
13-15 years (Mean±SD)		15-17 years (Mean±SD)	t	p-value
	4.84±2.82	4.98±3.08	.25	.61

Non-significant

Table 4: Per cent distribution of respondents on sharing personal information on Social Networking Sites (n=120)

Share personal information on SNSs	Frequency	%
Yes	23	19.2
No	97	80.2

Table 5: Gender differentials as per reasons for sharing personal information on Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Reasons for sharing personal information on SNSs	Total (n=120)	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
Social acceptance	84 (69.4)	34 (56.7)	50 (83.3)
Disconnect from family	22 (18.2)	4 (6.7)	18 (30.0)
Emotional support	40 (33.1)	19 (31.7)	21 (35.0)
Open oneself	33 (27.3)	15 (25.0)	18 (30.0)
Get attention	42 (37.0)	18 (30.0)	24 (40.0)
Feel relief after sharing their emotions	22 (18.2)	9 (15.0)	13 (21.7)

Multiple responses

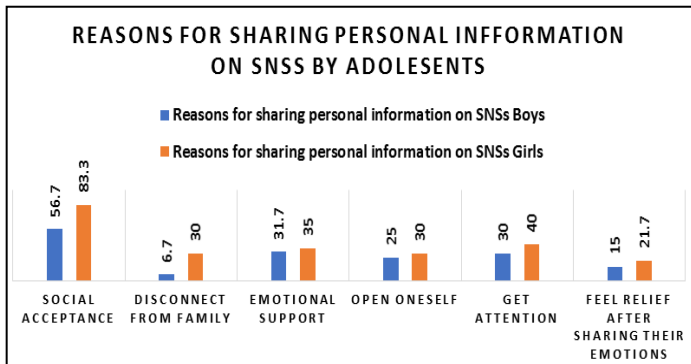


Fig 2: Gender differentials as per reasons for sharing personal information on Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Table 6: Gender differences (Mean±SD) on reasons for sharing personal information on Social Networking Sites by adolescence

Reason for sharing personal information	Boys (Mean±SD)	Girls (Mean±SD)	Sig.	p-value
Social acceptance	.58±.49	.83±.37	.00	39.09
Disconnect from family	.09±.29	.30±.46	.00	39.70
Emotional support	.33±.47	.35±.48	.79	.06
Open oneself	.27±.44	.30±.46	.53	.39
Get attention	.32±.47	.40±.49	.08	2.95
Feel relief after sharing their emotions	.15±.23	.20±.33	.00	35.50

Table 7: Gender differential in duration of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (n=120)

Duration of using SNSs	Total (n=120)	Boys (n=60)	Girls (n=60)
3-6 hours a day	25 (20.8)	2 (3.3)	23 (38.3)
1-3 hours a day	31 (25.8)	13 (21.7)	18 (30.0)
Less than one hour a day	40 (33.3)	30 (60.0)	10 (16.7)
Once in a week	17 (14.2)	10 (16.7)	7 (11.7)
Fortnightly	7 (5.8)	5 (8.3)	2 (3.3)

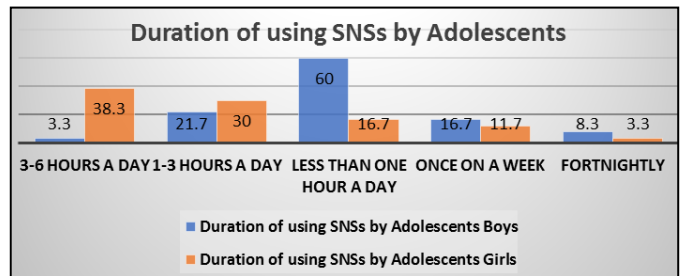


Fig 3: Gender differential in duration of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Table 8: Age differentials in duration of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (n=120)

Duration of using SNSs	Total (n=120)	13-15 years (n=39)	15-17 years (n=81)
3-6 hours a day	25 (20.8)	9 (23.1)	16 (19.8)
1-3 hours in a day	31 (25.8)	6 (15.4)	25 (30.9)
Less than one hour	40 (33.3)	18 (46.2)	22 (27.2)
Once in a week	17 (14.2)	6 (15.4)	11 (13.6)
Fortnightly	7 (5.8)	0	7 (5.8)

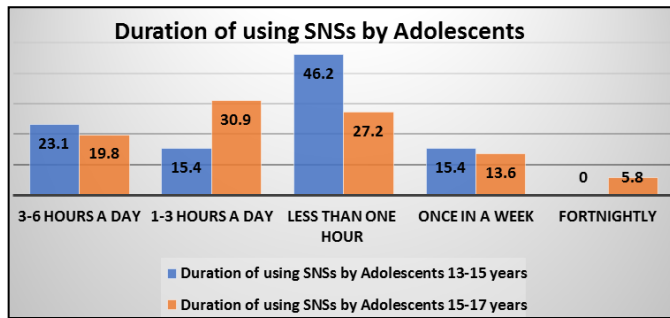


Fig 4: Age differentials in duration of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

## 5. References

1. Bazarova NN, Choi YH. Self-disclosure in social media: Extending the functional approach to disclosure motivations and characteristics on Social Networking Sites. *Journal of communication*. 2014; 64:635-657.
2. Diener E, Lucas RE, Oishi S. Subjective Well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction. In Synder CR., Lopez SJ, eds. *Handbook of positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005, 63-73.
3. Gable SL, Reis HT. Appetitive and aversive social interaction. In J. Harvey and A. Wenzel (Eds.), *Close romantic relationships: Maintenance and enhancement* (pp. 169-194). Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 2001.
4. Jan MT, Abdullah, K, Momen, A. Factors influencing the adoption of Social Networking Sites: Malaysian muslim users perspective. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management*. 2015; 3(2301-3567):267-270.
5. Jubayer SM. Use of Social Networking Sites among teenagers: A study of facebook use in Dhaka city. *Journal of International social issues*. 2013; 2:35-44.
6. Kaur T, Kiran jyoti. Gender based emotion mining from the text on Social Networking Sites (SNS). *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Software Engineering*. 2015; 5(2277 '128x):1318-1321.
7. Qian H and Scott CR. Anonymity and self? Disclosure on weblogs. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. 2007; 12(4):1428-1451.
8. Srivastava A. The effect of facebook use on life satisfaction and subjective happiness of college students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*. 2015; 2(2348-5396):204-216.
9. Tsai CH. Adolescents' trusts in various facebook friends and the differences in those trusts between parental awareness of adolescents' contacts with friends. *International Research in Education*. 2013; 1(2327-5499):75-78.
10. Uchino BN, Cacioppo JT, Kiecolt-Glaser JK. The relationship between social support and physiological processes: A review with emphasis on underlying mechanisms and implications for health. *Psychological Bulletin*. 1996; 119(3):488-531.
11. Wang Y, Burke M, Robert K. Modeling self-disclosure in social networking sites. *Computer Supported Cooperated Work Journal*. 2016; 74-85.
12. Wise AP. Exploring adolescents' Experiences of self-disclosing on facebook when distressed: Thesis. Falls church, Virginia, 2013.