

## **WHY ADOLESCENTS USE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*World Wide Web is a huge storehouse of knowledge which can be accessed through internet. These technologies have significantly influenced daily activities and quality of life of individuals. Social Networking Sites have become a revolutionized way of communication especially among youth. SNS count millions of members these days. For a growing number of Internet users, maintaining a profile on a SNS is part of their everyday life today especially adolescents. Thus what are the motivations of adolescents (age group 14-18 years) – male and female for using social networking sites? The study has conducted a survey comprising of 200 school students - 100 boys and 100 girls. The respondents were selected from the schools situated in Chandigarh. The study has established that there exists insignificant difference between male and female adolescents on variable of social connectivity, recognition, entertainment, information dimension of motivation for use of social networking sites. Teachers and parents, therefore, should not consider boys and girls on different footage regarding information technology.*

**Key words:** Gender, Motivation, Social Networking Sites.

### **INTRODUCTION**

World Wide Web is a huge storehouse of knowledge which can be accessed through internet. These technologies have significantly influenced daily activities and quality of life of

individuals. The popularity of social networking sites (SNS) are growing day by day and now it has become a revolutionized way of communication among youth. SNS count millions of members these days. For a growing number of Internet users, maintaining a profile on a social network site is part of their everyday life today especially adolescents. Therefore, what are the motivations of adolescents? Many researchers have been exploring and studying the use of SNS since early 2000s. Attempts have been made to study the motivations for use of SNS (Kim et.al., 2005; Brocke, Richter & Riemer, 2009; Kapidzic & Herring, 2011). Some scholars assessed the user's interests and expectations from SNS (Singhal, Shiraani, Regmi & Adhikary, 2009; Kwon & Wen, 2010). While others reported about the adolescents' motives behind using social networking sites as well as their various online activities (Gross, 2004; Valkenburg, 2005; Boyd, 2007; Pempek *et al*, 2009; Lin & Lu, 2011). Still others researchers defined different dimensions of using SNS by adolescents as well as usage pattern of internet facilities by female students (Barker, 2009; Oskouei and Chaudhary, 2010; Weiser, 2000).

SNS are increasing in popularity and use among adolescents. The increasing pervasiveness of the internet in the lives of adolescents is by now well established through the studies done at international level especially in developed countries, but there remains dearth of research in India on why adolescents are using SNS. Thus the study main objective is to gauge the motivations for use of SNS by adolescents - males and females. Further, the study confirms the initial hypothesis that there exists no significant difference between male and female adolescents on variable of social connectivity dimension of motivation for use of SNS.

This paper consists of three parts. First part contains introduction and some basic concepts pertaining to the study. Detail discussion and analysis on motivation for using SNS for both male and female adolescents are incorporated in part two. The final part contains concluding remarks.

## **MOTIVATION**

Motivation can be defined as the process that initiates and guides goal-oriented behaviours. Motivation is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge. The word 'motivation' was originally derived from the Latin word 'movere' which means 'to move' though this could be an inadequate description

for what is meant. The term motivation is frequently used to describe why a person does something. To be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated towards an end is considered motivated.

## **GENDER**

Oxford dictionary mentions that the word gender has been used since the 14th century as a grammatical term, referring to classes of noun designated as masculine, feminine, or neuter in some languages. The sense ‘the state of being male or female’ has also been used since the 14th century, but this did not become common until the mid 20th century. Although the words gender and sex both have the sense ‘the state of being male or female,’ they are typically used in slightly different ways: sex tends to refer to biological differences, while gender refers to cultural or social ones. In nutshell, gender is a matter of culture; it refers to social classification into masculine and feminine. Gender as a concept focus initially how social factors not bodies determine people’s behaviour.

## **ADOLESCENCE**

Aristotle is usually cited as the first source of detailed records of adolescent development. He described voice changes in sexes, breast development and menarche in the female, the appearance of pubic hair and seminal emissions in the male.

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is characterized by rapid physical, biological and hormonal changes resulting in to psychosocial, behavioural and sexual maturation between the ages of 10-19 years in an individual. It is also a stage when young people extend relationships beyond their parents and family. It is a time of intense influence of peers, and the outside world in the society. A desire to experiment and explore can manifest in a range of behaviours. Adolescents as they mature cognitively, the mental functioning process becomes analytic, capable of abstract thinking leading to articulation and independent ideology.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS)**

Internet is primarily a source of communication, information and entertainment. Social networking websites are online communities of people who share interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. They typically provide a variety of ways for users to interact, through chat, messaging, email, video, voice chat, file-sharing, blogging and discussion groups. As World Wide Web grew in popularity, social networking moved to web-based applications. In 2002, social networking era really started. In 2006, anyone with an e-mail address could sign up in social networking sites (Zarella, 2010). Concerning existing relationships, the Internet offers diverse quick and inexpensive communication channels to maintain them, thus affording larger social circles (diGennaro & Dutton, 2007; Donath & Boyd, 2004). There are dating sites, friendship sites, and sites with a business purpose and so on. Facebook is the leading personal site, and LinkedIn is the leading business site.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is a descriptive survey type of study. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomenon and whenever possible to draw valid general conclusion from the facts discovered. The total sample included in the present study comprised of 200 school students - 100 boys and 100 girls. The participants were selected from the schools situated in Chandigarh, India. Age range for the students was 14 to 18 years. Self prepared questionnaire was used to get scores on four different dimensions of motivations of use of social networking sites of male and female adolescents. The data obtained was subjected to statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis was worked out to ascertain the nature of distribution of scores on the variables of motivations that are social connectivity, recognition, entertainment and information for use of social networking sites of male and female adolescents. T-test was used to test the hypotheses.

## **GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS: USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

In order to know the normality of scores obtained on tool Motivations for Use of Social Networking Sites, the descriptive statistics such as Mean, Median, SD, skewness and kurtosis were employed for boys and girls. The results are presented in table 1 and table 2.

**Table 1: Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness and Kurtosis for Boys**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Social connectivity	28.67	29	5.503	-0.363	0.804
Recognition	50.50	50	7.116	-0.096	0.491
Entertainment	37.86	38	6.135	-0.179	-0.446
Information	28.81	28.50	5.637	0.802	2.248

Table 1 shows that the values for mean and median for the variable social connectivity are 28.67 and 29. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.363 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is .804 which is more than 0.263, hence the distribution is platykurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

Another variable is recognition and the values for mean and median for the variable are 50.50 and 50. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.096 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is 0.491 which is more than 0.263, hence the distribution is platykurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

The values for mean and median for the variable entertainment are 37.86 and 38. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.179 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is -0.446 which is less than 0.263, hence the distribution is leptokurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

The values for mean and median for the variable information are 28.81 and 28.50. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is .802 which is almost equal to zero. Hence,

distribution is slightly skewed. The value of kurtosis is 2.248 which is more than .263, hence the distribution is platykurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

**Table 2: Mean, Median, Mode, SD, Skewness and Kurtosis for Girls**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Social connectivity	28.76	30	5.822	-0.931	0.610
Recognition	50.43	52	6.430	-0.770	1.161
Entertainment	38.84	39	4.726	-0.128	0.175
Information	28.25	28	4.833	0.000	-0.374

Table 2 reveals that the values for mean and median for the variable social connectivity are 28.76 and 30. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.931 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is 0.610 which is more than 0.263, hence the distribution is platykurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

The values for mean and median for the variable recognition are 50.43 and 52. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.770 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is 1.161 which is more than 0.263, hence the distribution is platykurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

For the variable entertainment the values for mean and median are 38.84 and 39. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal. The value of skewness for variable is -0.128 which is almost equal to zero but negative. Hence, distribution is slightly negatively skewed. The value of kurtosis is 0.175 which is less than 0.263, hence the distribution is leptokurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

The values for mean and median for the variable information are 28.25 and 28. These values are almost equal with slight variation and hence distribution can be taken as nearly normal.

The value of skewness for variable is 0.000. Hence, the distribution is skewed. The value of kurtosis is -0.374 which is less than 0.263, hence the distribution is leptokurtic. Hence the distribution can be taken approximately normal.

**t-Test RESULT**

This section deals with hypotheses testing through t-test. The t-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. A t-test is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic follows a Student's t distribution if the null hypothesis is supported. It is most commonly applied when the test statistic would follow a normal distribution if the value of a scaling term in the test statistic were known.

**Table 3: t-ratio between boys and girls on different variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean boys</b>	<b>Mean girls</b>	<b>Degree of freedom (df)</b>	<b>t-test</b>
Social Connectivity	28.67	28.76	198	0.112
Recognition	50.50	50.43	198	-0.073
Entertainment	37.86	38.84	198	1.265
Information	28.81	28.25	198	-0.754

(t-value 2.59 to be significant at 0 .01 level for df 198; t-value 1.97 to be significant at 0.05 level for df 198)

Table 3 shows that for all variables calculated t-value for social connectivity (0.112), recognition (-0.073), entertainment (1.265) and information (-0.754) respectively is less than table value so this is insignificant. Hence there is no significant difference exists between boys and girls on the variables social connectivity, recognition, entertainment and information dimensions of motivation for use of social networking sites.

The above finding is justified in the light of arguments given below:

- The reason may be that both boys and girls feel equally to be connected with friends as well as people using latest technology because this may be more convenient to both.
- Both boys and girls want to be recognised equally in their peer group and create their own independent identity.

- Earlier there used to be traditional sources of entertainment and there was gender segregation but these days due to technology both boys and girls have equal access to sources of entertainment. Moreover girls feel that they are equal to boys as a result they are having similar interests as boys are having.
- Earlier it was not considered necessary for girls to have access to information sources but these days scenario has been changed and girls are equally aware of different issues. Moreover society approves it.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study showed insignificant difference between male and female adolescents on the variables social connectivity, recognition, entertainment and information dimensions of motivation for use of social networking sites. Both genders are having same motivations for using social networking sites. Thus teachers and parents should not consider boys and girls on different footage regarding information technology. Although use of social networking sites is banned in educational institutions but one should keep in mind that both genders are using these sites and consider them an important source of entertainment as well as getting information regarding outside world. Sometimes counsellors come across with different problems as far as adolescents are concern. These may be rooted in the use of social networking sites as adolescents may develop virtual relationships online and consider them for real which may lead to emotional upheaval. Adolescents have their own world and social networking sites add up to their virtual world. Parents and teachers should not think differently about boys and girls regarding use of social networking sites.

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