

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH: SELF CONSTRUCTION AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

There is tremendous change in youth's way of self construction and impression management. Social Construction of self in the age of social media is associated with the public self , the self that is visible and known to others. Youth via social media particularly Social Networking Sites(SNS) either wants to match one's self presentation to the audiences' expectation and preferences or wants to match one's self presentation to one's own ideal self. Youth is also engaged in impression management through social media by self presentation, self representation, self expression, self publication, self promotion, self marketing etc. Youth often show the best feature of their personality and life to others to raise their self esteem. Youth are constantly promoting themselves and are constantly connected. The social network is the place where young people mostly find the opportunity to explore and express their identities and their social relations. The popular youth culture now a days is about influence and interaction and this has been revolutionized by the use of technology. In the present study data was collected from students of technical institute in Lucknow city by the use of questionnaire method and it was revealed that while using social media they are engaged in creating an impression on others and are continuously constructing their self from the feedback of others.

Keywords: Self construction, Impression Management, Self esteem, Social Networking Sites, Youth.

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1.Introduction

Mass media are various media technologies which reach maximum people through mass communication. There is Broadcast media, Print media, Outdoor media, other Outdoor media and the Digital media. Digital media i.e. Internet and mobile mass communication are the most widely accessed communication tool of 21st century. The Internet is one of the most effective tool for communication and is the most interactive means of mass media .Internet services like E-mail, Online Chats, Web Pages, Social Networking Sites etc., have provided vast amount of information and have linked people with one another either staying geographically far or closer. It is user friendly and everything can be accessed .Unlike Broadcast media there is two way and many to many communication.

Social Networking Sites, one of the computer mediated communication, has grown rapidly in recent years. It provides an easy way to connect with other people, to access information, to interact and to share information. It is widely used by people of all ages but youth are queasier about Social Networking Sites. Social Networking Sites are “rapidly expanding phenomenon that is changing the nature of social relationship”(Muise ,Christofides & Desmarais,2009).

2.Problem Statement

This research paper attempts to see the role of social media in youth’s self construction and impression management.

3.Literature Review

Youth’s are in the stage of emerging adulthood and they usually explore life possibilities open to them and are able to arrive at more enduring choice in love, carrier and world view. Emerging adulthood is a period when change and exploration are common. It is the life period of possibilities in which many potential futures remain possible and youth freedom and exploration are higher than any other age (Arnett,J,2000).

The period of emerging adulthood grows with technological advancement, as the technology has an impact on the youth development. Technology provides youth a prolonged period of exploration and freedom and acquaintance to knowledge and information.

It is found in many researches that youth try to know their image in society. From the last decade youth in the life period of emerging adulthood spend more time on social media and are engaged in portraying their self.

Social networking sites a form of social media has become the mainstream communication technology among youth. Youth's are the most avid users of Social Networking Sites. It has become an integral part of their daily life and they spend most of their time on it for their social, personal, educational and interest needs. They no longer congregate with their peer group offline, but they prefer to make interaction and relations online.

In present time social media is increasingly playing an important role in youth life as most of the hour of youth is spent on social media sites. "Social Networking Sites particularly Facebook, is the part of youth daily life routine and besides their busy schedule they are engaged with social media" (**Pempek, Yermolayeva&Calvert,2009**). It can be said that social media may be playing an important role in the development of self of the individual.

According to **Mead**, mind and self is the product of social process. Individual's self and his self consciousness develop through communication with others i.e. when individual interacts with other person self arises. When people interact with one another they are engaged in creating impression of themselves in front of others. They are constantly engaged in impression management. Through this process they create identity about them and want others to confirm to that identity (**Erving Goffman, 1956**).

Young generation is exploring self by taking feedback from others. They interact with media to create their own meanings from the images and messages they receive (**Valkenburg, Schouten&Peter, 2005**).

Today average college graduates have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading , but over 10,000 hours playing video games. Computer games, email, internet, cell phones and instant messaging have become integral part of their life. Some refer these students as N-[for Net]-gen or D-[for digital]-gen or digital natives. They are the native speakers of the digital language of

computers ,video games and internet and like to receive information fast, like parallel processing and multi tasking , prefer graphics before text, prefer random access, function best when networked and do well on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They are very much used to phone in their pockets, broadcasted message, instant messages and library in their laptops **(Prensky,2001)**.

The digital platform is used by students to create an identity of themselves and to share it with other users so that they can know about them through their post. Self is developed from the feedback they get from others on the digital platforms **(Toshie Takahashi, 2016; Pempek,T.A., Yermolayeva,Y.A., & Calvert,S.L.,2009)**.

Very often it is seen that the users use social media platforms for selective self presentation **(Jiang et al., 2011)**.

Malene Charlotte Larsen,2016 examined the youth's construction of identity online by illustrating the ways teenager communicate in terms of emotional statement which is not only the part of practicing friendship but also an important part of their self presentation online. It is opined in the study that emotional statement made by youths strategically and publicly online are the method of presenting their identity as well as others identity. Young people are continuously constructing and co-constructing their identity on social networking sites.

Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. ,2009 found that Students mostly spend time on looking at other users' profiles without communicating with them. Lurking is important reason for students to be on social networking sites.

(M.Neelamalar & P.Chitra,2009 study on the impact of social network sites on the Indian youth revealed that out of 100 sample of youth taken from school and college, 60% of them are attempting to establish their identity/personality through these sites.

Youth carefully select the photos for their profiles on Social Networking Sites and they are very conscious and strategic in their visual self presentation. They also have clear knowledge about

the qualities that a person should possess to become popular among Social Networking Sites users. **(Andra Siibak,2009)**

“For the construction of coherent self identity consistency is important. Social Networking sites aid in identity consistency where important events of past and present life can be stored and expressed. The virtual space becomes real as bunch of experiences are stored and reflected upon. Youth display their image in Social Networking Sites peer legitimize the image by comments and the information is made real and permanent ,depicting the meaning and gestures behind the image. This process enables users to convey elaborate messages within each image. In this way youth are using virtual space to show about their selves. Photos that are posted on Social Networking Sites have the mechanism of self presentation. The tools available on SNS for self presentation seem to encourage self disclosure in the interest of promoting a desired image.”
(Goldie salim khan, Adriana M.Manago, Pitricia M.Greenfield,2010)

Internet has created new tools for self presentation. Social networking Sites provides a platform for selective self presentation through photograph, personal details, personal views and comments. It provides new access to self as an object. Selective self-presentation through digital media can have a positive influence on self-esteem. Profile (i.e., status, photo, etc.) editing for self-presentation enhances self esteem. social-network profiles provides a lot of time to construct positive self-presentations, profiles contain information that prompts positive, rather than negative, effects on self-esteem. Self awareness is increased by the use of social networking sites. Selective self presentation and its approval by other raises self esteem. Non edited profiles do not enhance self esteem. **(Amy L. Gonzales, M.A., and Jeffrey T. Hancock, 2011)**

Students either feel positive or have negative affect on their self esteem by the use of social networking sites. Only few felt negative affect. Other’s comment on students profile influence their self concept and sometimes they are ignorant with this. The number of friends on Social Networking Sites also affect their self concept . As more number of friends is correlated with more comments and thus increased self esteem. **(Megan S and Priscilla G,2013)**

“In the modern technical social and Psychological setting individuals constantly work on themselves and perform their self development in Public space through Social Networking Sites which is conceptualized as ‘Technique of Self according to Foucault. It is explored that posting on facebook is a tool for self formation.” (Theresa Sauter,2013)

1. Objective of Study

1. To know the role of Social Media in Self Construction of youth
2. To find out process of Impression Management by youth through Social media.
3. To know the gender difference in the usage of social media

2. Methodology of study

It is questionnaire survey type research carried out on 18-22 years undergraduate students .This study has the sample size of 60 respondents. Random sampling method is used to decide the sample. There were 30 boys and 30 girls in the sample. The boys and girls are from technical institute in Lucknow. Questionnaire is distributed to students and their response was collected. The questionnaire consisted of both open and close ended questions. Due to limited resource it was not possible to include whole population of college in study.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Response of the respondents are collected and analyzed to see the usage pattern of SNS by the youth, to know the self construction and impression management done by students and to understand the gender difference in the usage of social media.

Table 1: Various Social Networking Sites used by youth

SNS	Respondents					
	Male	Percentag e	Femal e	Percentag e	Tota l	Percentage
Facebook	28	93	27	90	55	92

Whatsapp	30	100	30	100	60	100
Instagram	12	40	10	33	22	37
YouTube	18	60	18	60	36	60
Google+	06	20	09	30	15	25
Skype	06	20	00	00	06	10
Twitter	03	10	00	00	03	05
Linkedin	00	00	00	00	00	00

It Shows that the youth's are the member of different Social Networking Sites. They are the regular users and spend 1 -2 hours daily for chatting, sharing images or information as revealed by them. The important Social Networking Sites used by the students are Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram and youtube. They are regular users of these sites and amongst these sites facebook is used most by both males and females. It is found that majority of male (93%) and female (90%) youth are the member of Facebook. They are regular member of Whatsapp. A good number of both male (60%) and female (60%) youth use Youtube .40% male and 33% female use Instagram for sharing their photo's. A very few, Male (20%) and Female (30%) are the user of Google +.Skype and Twitter is used by limited number of boys i.e. 20% and 10% respectively. Girls are not the users of Skype and twitter. No one is the member of Linkedin as it is a professional website and the respondents are undergraduate students.

Table 2: Purpose of using social networking sites

Purpose of using social networking sites	Respondents					
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Communication and information sharing	28	93	27	90	55	92
Chatting	28	93	28	93	56	93

Studying	26	87	20	67	46	77
Gaming	16	53	8	27	24	40
Shopping	15	50	25	83	40	67
To share video/picture and music	25	83	20	67	06	10
To make new friends	08	27	02	7	00	00

The students responded that mostly they used the social media sites for communication with their class mates and friends. They regularly chat with their friends through these sites and use it more for chatting with those friends and relatives who are staying far from them. Both male and female students use it for study purpose and they share home work, assignment, projects with their classmates via these sites. They become the part of the study group present on these sites. Some Males play games on these sites whereas very few females are indulged in online games. But females are more interested in online shopping than males. Both of them are involved in sharing photo/picture and music .It was found that only 2% females and 8% males make new friends on these sites and are mostly friends with their known friends.

Table 2: Posting of personal information on social networking sites

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	09	30	03	10	12	20
No	21	70	27	90	48	80
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It shows that very few respondents are interested in revealing their personal information. Female youth (10%) are less interested in sharing personal information as compared to male (30%) youth. They don't share the personal information because of issue of privacy. As they believe that their personal identity will be misused by the third party.

Table 3: Profiles on social networking sites customized

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	80	27	90	51	85
No	06	20	03	10	09	15
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It shows that both male and female youth customize their profile, but females are more in practice. They purposely and selectively make their profile and want to make their profile page more attractive.

Table 4: Disclosure of only good qualities on social networking sites

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	27	90	28	93	55	92
No	03	10	02	07	05	8
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It shows that maximum number of respondents i.e. 90% males and 92% females, show their good qualities on SNS. They are of the view that social media is not the platform to show bad things about themselves. They think that by sharing their good qualities they can raise their self esteem. A few respondents i.e. (10%) male and (7%) female were neutral about this and they do not make a thought for sharing of good qualities on social media sites.

Table 5: Social networking sites as a platform to know good or bad about oneself

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	03	10	06	20	09	15
No	27	90	24	80	51	85
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

Maximum number of the respondents revealed that good or bad quality can not be known from the information that is shared in the form of photo, video likes or dislikes on social networking site because other users put their views for the particular post which is shared and that particular post can not reveal good or bad quality of a person.

Table 6: Social networking sites as a platform to know what others think about oneself

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	80	18	60	42	70
No	06	20	12	40	18	30
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It shows that maximum number of male respondents (80%) and average numbers of female respondents (60%) believe that they can know what other's think about oneself. They revealed that by other's comments and arguments we come to know what other thinks about us. They think that shy people can freely communicate to other person via SNS and know their views, as they hesitate to talk face to face. Some of the respondents (20%) male and (40%) female are of the view that by meeting face to face one can judge what other think about us as sometimes the comments are not true about their personality .They are just mere their opinion for them.

Table 7: Social networking sites as a platform to develop social and personal identity

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	21	70	18	60	39	65
No	09	30	12	40	21	35
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It Shows that maximum number of male respondents (70%) and average number of female respondents (60%) believe that social networking sites is a platform to develop social and personal identity as they can share more information on social networking sites about themselves to others, can get others opinion and can easily introduce themselves against time and distance, which is helpful for constructing social and Personal identity. Some male (30%) and female

(40%) believe that identity can not be constructed through social networking sites, but it is constructed through face to face meeting.

Table 8: Manipulation of oneself to have a one's positive impression on others

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	80	27	90	51	85
No	06	20	03	10	09	15
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It shows that maximum number of respondents i.e. 80% male and 90% female youth revealed that they manipulate themselves to have a their positive impression on others. Only few, 20% of male and 10% female youth don't do this and are not interested in creating an impression on others. This is very much related to concept of impression management given by Erving Goffman. Social networking sites are playing an important role in impression management as it is a platform to influence others without dependence on the time and space. And this is how the students are able to create an identity of oneself. The students revealed that mostly they use this platform to create an impression on those people who are at distant place and depend on these sites to know about that person.

Table 9: Showing of happy images on social networking sites

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	30	100	30	100	10	100
No	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

Results showed that both male and female students were interested in posting happy images of themselves on social networking sites. They share their achievements and happy moments of their life. They feel happy to share their life events. It gives them a sense of satisfaction and their confidence is raised by sharing happy images and the appreciation they get in the form of comment and likes boost their morale.

Table 10: Showing of sad photos on social networking sites

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	06	20	03	10	09	15
No	24	80	27	90	51	85
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

It was reported by the respondents that they rarely post sad photos on social networks; sometimes they post sad smilies or sad images or sad quotes to show their sadness. It was found that both male and female students rarely post sad sentiments. Only 15% shared their sad emotions on social networking sites.

Table 11: Choosing attractive photo of oneself to post on social networking sites

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	80	27	90	51	85
No	06	20	03	10	09	15
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

From the response of the students it was found that they choose the most attractive photo to post on social networking sites. Both male and female use the attractive photo to share but female students are more concerned to post most attractive photo as compared to male students. They revealed that the comments they get on photo makes them happy. Sharing of attractive photo raised their self esteem and confidence.

Table 12: Communication with other users on social networking sites positively or negatively affects self esteem

Response	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	80	26	87	50	83
No	06	20	04	13	10	17
Total	30	100	30	100	60	100

Respondents were asked whether communication on social networking sites affect their self esteem positively or negatively. It Shows that maximum number of respondents communication with other users on social networking sites positively or negatively affect their self esteem. 80% boys and 90% girls are positively or negatively affected .They revealed that positive comments helps them in building their self confidence and negative comment reduces their self esteem .They are highly affected by the views of others and their comments effect their image of self. Sometimes students misunderstand the conversation and it also lowers their self esteem. 20% boys and 13 % girls don't see any effect on self esteem as they ignore the opinions of others given on social media.

4. Conclusion

The present study focused on the use of social media sites by undergraduate students of technical institute in Lucknow city. Social media sites provide various ways to students to interact with each other. Students keep themselves updated by surfing profile of each other; by posting of messages, videos and photos and by sharing personal information on social media platform. The study shows that in today's scenario most of the boys and girls are user of internet and social media. Facebook and Whatsapp are the most used social media platforms. Maximum number of boys and girls refrain from posting personal information on social media sites, as they look for privacy. It was also found that maximum number of respondents customizes their profile and girls are more interested in making their profile more attractive. It was also found that most of them disclosed only good qualities about themselves. Also the respondents were of the view that good or bad qualities of oneself can not be known from the information that is shared on social media sites. But they think that from the feedback of other user's they can know what other people think about them. Respondents also told that sharing of information and images helps them in developing their personal and social identity. They also believed that their post also

changes the perception of other for them. And they mostly focused on creating a positive impression on others by their photos, videos and other information. They always show their happy image and very rarely shared sad emotions on these platforms. Most of them time their aim was to portray their appealing and captivating images of themselves and girls are more conscious for this. The positive comments of other users raised their self esteem and negative comments lowered their self esteem to some extent. All these findings showed the relevance of Goffman concept of impression management in today's scenario to understand the use of new media technology i.e. social media by youth to create an impression on others and to develop their personal and social identity. It also shows that virtual world to certain extent also help in the construction of self.

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