

A STUDY OF SOCIAL NORMS ON SOCIAL WEBSITE

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Abstract:

We are living in a connected world of internet. It is growing all over the world very rapidly and India is now become world's second largest country to have around 201 million internet users. This study is about to explore the social media use by the people. Social media create a new web society where people have to follow some rules and regulation. Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in systematic, objective and quantities manner for the purpose of measuring variables. Content analysis is an efficient way to investigate the content of media. In this environment some norms are also followed by the people to get in touched with the peers. The diversity between the idea, thoughts, opinion and language etc gathered through this new media. So users of these sites developed their own rules to behave on the net. This study is to know what accepted social norms are followed by the new media users. These norms are not the written rules by any group but followed by everyone.

Key-words- *Social Media, Social Norms, Social Website, Facebook, Content analysis, Cross-tabulation*

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Introduction: Social network sites may be defined as web based service that allow individual to construct a public or semi-public profile within abounded system articulate a list of other user with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site (Boyd, Ellison, 2007). It is shaping individuals social life with easy connectivity to friends and other people of society and also closely related to enhancing the social capital of the individual. While we use the term “social network site” to describe this phenomena, the term “social networking site” also appears in public discourse and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We are living in a connected world of internet. It is growing all over the world very rapidly and India is now become world’s second largest country to have around 201 million internet users. Social media user is also reached on high ranking with 82 million active users (IAMAI Report, 2013). Internet is embedded in everyday life. We have moved from the world of internet wizards to a world of ordinary people using the internet (*Wellman, 2011*). Internet can now be recognized as one more resources for communicating about and co- constructing a shared reality of social ends and means (*Jensen, 2011*). If we talk about the uses of social media it enriched the internet use in India and open the way of direct communication. Through mobile phones connectivity between users the use of social media increased. This is the way to stay connected online and this connectivity between various devices happened only because of the digital divide. This is a phenomenon that exists between racial, ethnic and socio- economic group. The digital divide is conceived as- social and political problem, not a technical one (Randolph, 2008). Tim O’ Reilly in 2005 called web 2.0 an ‘interactive space’ because this new web goes beyond its role of a ‘worldwide electronic library’, where people get involved and benefits from it. (Cabanac et. al, 2008).

Facebook is an online networking site that allows its users to create detailed personal Profiles that link with other users. Features such as photo posting, commenting on other users’ “Walls,” and joining groups relating to a shared interest also form a large part of the Facebook experience. Initially requiring membership in a university community, Facebook more recently includes members from specific high schools, regions, and companies. Social browsing is limited to the Friends that the user lists and people from the user’s offline community (e.g. a university or city). Users can manipulate their Profile’s privacy settings to control access to their entire

Profile, photos, wall posts, and other social information. Facebook has achieved notoriety among college students, strongly figuring into their everyday activities and ways of speaking.

This study is about to explore the social media use by the people. Social media create a new web society where people have to follow some rules and regulation. In this environment some norms are also followed by the people to get in touched with the peers. The diversity between the idea, thoughts, opinion and language etc gathered through this new media. So users of these sites developed their own rules to behave on the net. This study is to know what accepted social norms are followed by the new media users. These norms are not the written rules by any group but followed by everyone. One must understand what the individual does as a group participant and how other in the group. Respond to such element in human behavior is to view the individual as a social person as one who is the part of a network of communication within which behavior is directed towards other and received from them in return (Palazzola, 1981).

Social norms are belief about what is acceptable in social context. Social norms are the rules that a group uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitude and behaviors. Norms are cultural phenomenon that prescribe and proscribe behavior in specific circumstances. Without norms it is hard to imagine how interaction and exchange between strangers take place at all. The social norms is refers to what one should do and don't do in a given situation (Dubois, 2003). James Coleman, a political scientist in 1980's talked about importance of social norms, obligations and rules followed by the society to connect with each other. These norms and rules are helpful for the society to build their relationships (Coleman, 1988). Putnam (2000) also emphasis the important of social norms and trust for building up the social relationships. If we talk about social media norms, they are presently undefined. So in this study we decided these norms as our own understanding and which are accepted by everyone like- frequent status update, likes and comments on other post decently. Our online interaction can complement other communication channel in support of existing social relationship and they can open up new, exclusively virtual, relationships maintained through online groups, communities and worlds. The main objective of the study is to understand the social media norms and how users use these social norms, and also studied about the similarities and dissimilarity between social norms and social media norms.

Various studies have been focused on social media uses earlier. People use conversed media to fulfill their personal and collective needs (Papacharissi & Mendelso, 2011). As the

member of the social network increase so does the popularity of using the site for satisfying affective and cognitive needs. Individuals use SNS to experience a selective, efficient, and immediate connection with others for their interpersonal communication satisfaction and as an ongoing way to seek the approval and support of other people (Urista, Dong & Day, 2008). Perceived playfulness and attitude was the strongest indicator of intent to use SNS's (Chiang, 2013). The use such sites depends on the demographic characteristic and social surrounding of user, their uses might relate to the particular SNS they embrace. It suggests some systematic differences between users and non- user and also different population select into the use of different service (Hargittai (2007).

The user use facebook as a self presentation tool, this is to build, invest, and maintain ties with distant friends. Desire to engage with their peers also motivates the frequency of site visit (Joinson, 2008).The intensity of facebook use is positively associated with life satisfaction and social trust and also there is a strongest relationship with civic and political engagement (Valenzuela, Park, and Kerk 2009). Kay (2008) found in his study that male have significantly positive attitude and high self efficacy towards computer but female have more positive attitude in online environment. Nevarez (2008) studied about the modern cities and the relation with new technology and society. They are interconnected in a web of relations that is fluid and technology also 'shapes are relations to the world that surrounds us, modifying it into something that can be used and manipulated to submit to our needs and desire'.

Hara and Estrada (2005) question the internet's alleged positive influence on political processes. Those involve in online political activism are more likely to be more active offline as well. (Whan de Jang ,2008,p.91). Children and youth people are usually the earliest and most enthusiastic users of information and communication technology. And they are experiencing the internet as a valued new place for social exploration and self expression (Livingstone, 2011).

Methodology:

Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in systematic, objective and quantities manner for the purpose of measuring variables. Content analysis is an efficient way to investigate the content of the media. The following description will make it clear how the present research has been planned. Content analysis has been adopted for the study. This is a primary source of data collection. Here we selected the social networking site 'Facebook'

because this is one the most popular site among social media users. Sample has been selected from the friend list of the researcher. Eighty Facebook user's profile is studied from the period of 22 to 28 June, 2014 and around 204 posts of the users are critically examined and tabulated. Unit of analysis including -study of the profile of users with specific concern on the profile photo, gender, age , no. of friends, and also topic of the status updates, likes and nature of comments on the sharing post.

Data Analysis

Statistical tools are used to measure the data. Cross-tabulation of the main variables is completed through SPSS version 16. All data is formed in percentage. To understand the uses of social network first we should understand how users maintain their profile and how they wanted to connect with their friends. After examined the profile photo and age it is found that 73.7% users used their original photo on the profile but 43.2% of them not mentioned their age. They only show their birthday only. Among the total users 16.2% are not mentioned any information about their age or birthday and 58.7% among the total mentioned their date of birth. Moreover 21.3% users are between age group of 15 to 30 year and 3.7% are above 30years. This shows that most of the people want to connect with friends through their original identity.

Table 1. Profile photo and friends

| | | not mentioned | 1- 250 | 251- 500 | 501- 750 | 751- 1000 | above 1000 | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| profile photo | original | 16.2 | 20.2 | 5.1 | 18.6 | 3.4 | 17.3 | 73.7 |
| | formatted | 3.8 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.2 |
| | Clips | 2.5 | 6.2 | 0 | 6.7 | 0 | 0 | 13.7 |
| | public figure | 1.2 | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.2 |
| | Total | 32.2 | 33.7 | 3.7 | 25.4 | 2.5 | 17.3 | 100 |

Table 1. The connection between profile photo and number of friends occur very strongly in the figure. Original profile photo users have more friends than the others who have formatted photos, clips, public figure etc. Most of the users, 20.1 percent have friends between 1- 250 and it is also

significant that 17.5 percent, the second highest of them have 1000 and above friends. It means that their original identity also play a significant role in building a strong relationship. Males are more dominated on the site with the percentage of 68.7 and female have lower frequency with 31.2 percent. But both male and females equally are found to mention their date of birth only. They both are not wanted to show their age in the profile. In the age group of 15- 30 only 12.5 percent male and 5 percent female showed their age. The age group of above 30 only 3.8 percent male mentioned their age. No female have mentioned their age that is above 30. People are not much interested to show their age with their friends and followers.

Table 2. Gender and no. of friends

| | | No. of Friends | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|----------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| | | not mentioned | 1- 250 | 251- 500 | 501- 750 | 751- 1000 | above 1000 | Total |
| Gender | Male | 16.2 | 21.2 | 0 | 11.5 | 2.5 | 17.5 | 68.8 |
| | Female | 7.5 | 12.5 | 3.8 | 7.5 | 0 | 0 | 31.2 |
| | Total | 34.5 | 49.1 | 5.5 | 27.3 | 2.5 | 17.5 | 100 |

Table 2. This table is showing some interesting figure. Male users have more friend than females. This is surprising that no female user have 1000 or above friends in all 80 users. The highest percentage of male friends is 21.2 percent between 1- 250 and female have 12.5 percent. But this also significant that 17.5 percent male have more than one thousand friends. Female are just loosing this side. It appeared that female is not the heavy users of Facebook.

Table 3. Topic and nature of comments

| | | Nature of comments | | | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------------------|--------|----------------|----------|----------|-------|
| | | no comments | formal | conversational | informal | personal | Total |
| Topic | Not applied | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| | Personal | 5.3 | 5.8 | 4.4 | 2.9 | 1 | 19.4 |
| | Social | 2.4 | 2.4 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 6.3 |
| | Political | 0.5 | 1 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 2.9 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Health | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.5 |
| Education | 1.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.9 |
| Poetic | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1.9 | 0 | 3.9 |
| Religious | 2.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.9 |
| Quotes | 1 | 3.4 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 6.3 |
| News | 3.4 | 3.4 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 6.3 |
| Entertainment | 1.5 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 3.9 |
| Patriotic | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Cultural | 0.5 | 3.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.9 |
| Information | 4.4 | 3.4 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 9.2 |
| Funny | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.5 |
| Professional | 1.5 | 2.4 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 | 5.3 |
| Events | 1 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 2.9 |
| Wishing | 0.5 | 1.9 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 2.4 |
| Total | 47.6 | 30.1 | 16.0 | 6.3 | 1.9 | 100 |

Table 3. Social norms can be reflecting in the language and behavior of the user on the site. If we study the nature of the comments on the different type of post it appeared that usually people used formal comment on a status update. People use their personal content more on the site with the highest percentage of 19.4 and second highest is the informative content with 9.2 percent. This study is on social site but here social content used by the user is only 6.3 percent. It means that instead of social site it seems self presentational website more.

Table 4. Category of photos and no. of Likes

| Category of photos | No. of Likes | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| | not applied | 1- 20 | 21- 40 | 41- 60 | 61- 80 | 81- 100 | above 100 | |
| no photos | 2.9 | 32.8 | 7.3 | 2.4 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | 46.3 |
| personal | 1 | 9.7 | 3.9 | 0 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 17.0 |
| caricature | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|------|
| cartoons | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.9 |
| social relevance | 0 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Groups | 0.5 | 8.7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.5 | 1 | 12.6 |
| formatted quotes | 1 | 5.3 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.3 |
| graphics | 0 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.9 |
| public figure | 0 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.9 |
| informative | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.4 |
| News | 0.5 | 1.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.4 |
| clips | 0.5 | 2.4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.9 |
| Total | 7.8 | 67 | 16 | 3.9 | 1 | 1.5 | 2.9 | 100 |

Table 4. The uses of Facebook are mainly known for photo and video sharing. Personal photos are more shared on the site. 46 percent users not shared any photo with their post but around 56 percent shared photos on their wall. The study on category of photos found that 29.6 percent out of 56 percent shared personal and group photos and 9.3 people liked the content between 1-20 likes. After the personal photo sharing, formatted quotes leading the site with 7.3 percent. Individual getting more connected through their personal content.

There is no connection between age and relationship status. Among who mentioned their age between 15-30 years, 15 percent mentioned their relationship status and above 30 years only 3.8 percent told about their relationship. The total number of users, 78.7 percent wants to tell about their status. It means that most of the users share their relationship status with their friends.

Result and Discussion

- ✓ *The use of social network is mainly for self presentation or identity formation.*
- ✓ *People want to connect with their original identity in the virtual space.*
- ✓ *Mostly user follows the norms of social site, for example- likes and comments on friends post, give opinion, interact with each other instantly.*
- ✓ *No abusive content was found to share by anyone.*

After empirically testing the data it is found that Main uses of the site seems here as a self presentation tool. Users want to connect with society but through their own deeds not by the

social content. We called the facebook a social site but some where it is also grabbing the mind of the users, they behave pleasantly on the social site Facebook. Users shared their personal content, like other's post, comments decently on the other status, formal comments are more used. No abusive content was found on the site used by the users in seven days of study. People followed the social norms such as posting relevant content on the site which has no harm for anybody. With their original identity individual want to connect with the people. But in groups social norms are not followed by the users. For example users add their friends in group without their consent or notification. They would just invite the other friend to add in the group. Limitation of the study is that there are only some selected users included for the research; everyone is not behaving in a proper way on the internet. Fake accounts, hacking and phishing is there to interrupt the uses of social media. Many cases have been found of allegedly using the site as a threat not for individual but for the whole country. There are both good and bad effect of this medium and urgent need a regularity body over the content of social media.

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