



Social Networking Habits of Early and Late Adolescents–A Comparative study

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Abstract

We are living in the Cyber or Networking Age and the advancement in the field of communication technology has created a world with no boundary or limitation. In India, social networking sites are getting more popular and it has become a vital part of our social life. This study seeks to find out the “social networking habits of adolescents”. Sixty early adolescents in the age group of 12 – 14 years and sixty late adolescents in the age group of 15 – 18 years, forming a total of 120 respondents were selected for the comparative study. The study revealed that the social networking habits of early and late adolescents did not differ significantly. However early adolescents were found to be more extensive user of social networking. The study also showed that although the respondents favoured social networking and spent considerable amount of time in social networking, they are concerned about the addictive influence of social networks and social networking habits taking away their time and deviating them from their responsibilities.

Keywords: Social, networking, habits, early, late adolescents, comparative, study.

Introduction

In this 21st century, social networking has become a global phenomenon. Today social networking is an essential communication medium in professional, educational as well as in personal life. According to Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia, there are more than 300 social networks. Social networking sites are a type of virtual community that has grown tremendously in popularity. Millions of people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or geographic boundaries access social networking sites to communicate, share information, thought or ideas, to keep in touch with friends, find new friends, dates and jobs. Using social media web sites is among the most common activity of today's children and adolescents. Thus social networks are online service, platform or sites that focus on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people. In short, a social networking site is a hub for communication, entertainment and information¹.

Social networking site is a social structure made of individuals or organizations called 'nodes', which are tied up by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislikes or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige². According to Elizabeth Hurlock, the term adolescence comes from a Latin word “adolescere”, meaning “to grow” or to “grow to maturity”. Primitive people – as were true also in earlier civilization – do not consider puberty and adolescence to be distinct periods in the life span; the child is regarded as an adult when capable of reproduction. As it is used today, the term adolescence has a broader meaning. It includes mental, emotional and social maturity as well as physical maturity³.

Adolescent is defined by WHO as a person between 10 – 19 years of age. There are about 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide and one in every five people in the world is an adolescent. Adolescence is a phase of rapid growth and development during which physical, sexual and emotional changes occur. Adolescents are homogenous group and their needs vary with their gender, stages of development, life circumstances and the socio economic conditions in which they live.

Methodology

Tool used: A structure questionnaire was formulated by the investigator for the purpose of studying the social networking habits in adolescents. Care was taken to avoid ambiguous, incorrect and biased questions while preparing the question.

Description of the tool: The tool consisted of 27 statements related to social networking sites with multiple options. The questionnaire contained 17 open ended question and 10 closed ended questions. The questionnaire included questions regarding the respondent's preference of social networking sites, mobile social networking and privacy concerns and also seeks their opinion about social networking. It also consisted of specific data, specific networking habits, purpose, where and why social networking sites are accessed or used by the respondents.

Sample size: 60 early adolescents and 60 late adolescents formed the sample. And the samples were taken from the following schools and colleges: i. Bishop Cotton PUC College, Bangalore, ii. Mega Manipur School, Imphal, iii. Public School, Imphal, iv. Assam Valley School, Assam, v. Indirani College of

Nursing, Pondicherry, vi. A.E.C.S Maruti Dental College, Bangalore, vii. R.V Dental Colleges, Bangalore, viii. M.M.I.P.R Haryana, ix. National Institute of Science and Tech, Odisha, x. P.G.P.C.E.T, Tamil Nadu.

Data Collection: Nature of the data collection was a survey method. For the present study data was collected both by personally distributing the questionnaire to the respondents and also by collecting information through online.

Pilot Study: A pilot study was conducted on 10% of the sample, following which the data was analysed and necessary modifications were made in the questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis: The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using percentage, mean, standard deviation and chi-square.

Results and Discussion

Table-1 portrays the time since of social networking sites use by respondents. From the above data it is clear that majority of the subjects have been using social networking site from more than two years. However among the two groups higher percentages of early adolescents (62%) have been using social networking sites for more than two years as against 54% of late adolescents. On the contrary higher percentage of late adolescent (19%) have been using social networking sites from past 1 – 2 years, and 17% have been using from less than one year. An equal percentage of adolescents from both ages categories are beginners, using social networking sites from six months.

Table-1
Time since Social Networking Done

Time since	Early adolescents		Late adolescents		Chi – square value
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Less than 6 months	6	10	6	10	1.3539NS
Less than 1 year	6	10	10	17	
1 to 2 years	11	18	11	19	
More than 2 years	37	62	32	54	

NS = not significant

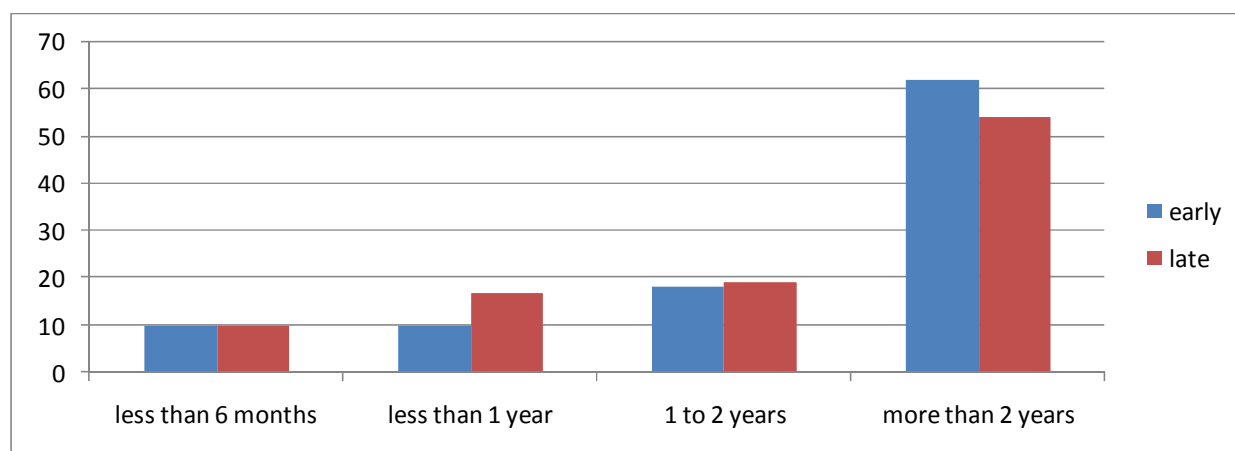


Figure-1
Time since Social Networking Done

Table-2
Frequency of using social networking sites

Frequency of using social networking sites	Early adolescents		Late adolescents		Chi-square test
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Several times in a day	21	35	22	44	13.5737**
Once in a day	33	55	12	24	
Several times in a week	3	5	8	16	
Few in a week	3	5	8	16	

**Significant at 1% level

Table-2 portrays the data regarding the frequency of using social networking site. From the above data it is clear that fifty five percent of early adolescents use social networking sites once a day against twenty four percent of late adolescents. On the contrary higher percentage of (44%) of late adolescents visit social networking site several times a day as against thirty five percent of the early adolescents. Less percentage of both early and late adolescents use social networking sites use it once a week or few times a week. The highly significant Chi – square test value (13.5737**) also proves that there is a high association between the two groups in the reasons for using social networking sites.

Table – 3 depicts the data regarding the number of hours spent the respondents on social networking sites by the respondents. From the above table it is clear that majority of the early adolescents (50%) spend 2 – 3 hours on social networking sites, in the contrary majority of late adolescents who spend 1 – 2 hours per day on social networking sites. Further it is seen that high percentage (24%) of late adolescents spend less than one hour on social networking site as against by 15% of early adolescents. However least percentage of early adolescent (2%) and late adolescents (10%) spend more than three hours per day on social networking sites.

Table-3
Hours spent per day on Social Networking Sites.

No. of hours per day	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Less than 1hr.	9	15	14	24
1 – 2 hrs.	20	33	23	38
2 – 3 hrs.	30	50	17	28
More than 3 hrs.	1	2	6	10

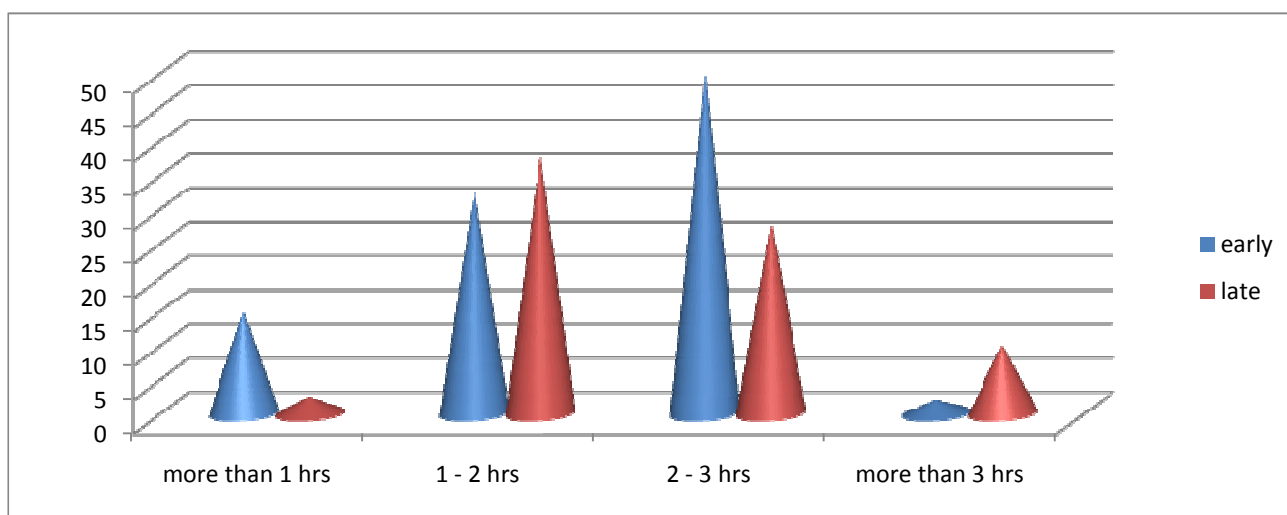


Figure-2
Hours spent per day on social networking sites

Table-4
Place of accessing Social Networking Sites

Place	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents		Chi – Square value
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Home	59	36	46	34	8.4808NS
School	4	2	7	5	
Cafe	30	19	24	18	
Library	0	0	1	1	
Mobile phone	57	35	39	29	
Friends or Family’s House	12	7	12	9	
Others	1	1	6	4	

NS Not Significant

Table-5
Room preferred for using Social Networking Sites

Room	Early adolescents		Late adolescents		Chi square value
	Number	percentage	Number	percentage	
Living room	37	37	21	24	15.5512**
Bedroom	53	53	38	43	
Dinning room	1	0	2	2	
Study room	10	10	23	26	
other	0	0	4	5	

**Significant at 1% level

Table-6
Influence of social networking habits on personal factors

Responses	Early adolescents		Late adolescents		Chi - Square
	No	%	No	%	
Ignoring family and friends.	15	25	20	33	1.00846NS
Reprimanded for spending more with online people.	47	78	30	50	10.4741**
Ignoring homework and household chores.	15	25	26	43	4.48282**
Staying up late or getting up early.	53	88	36	60	12.5697**
Disobeying parents and teachers.	19	32	28	47	2.8329NS
Interacting more with online people.	18	30	31	52	5.8329*
Have more friends online.	55	92	39	65	12.5695**
Losing temper when social networking breaks down	57	95	37	62	19.6399**

Table-4 depicts the data regarding the place the respondents use to access the internet and visit social networking sites. From the data it is clear that majority and also almost an equal percentage of both early and late adolescent groups use internet at home (36% and 34% respectively). Thirty five percent of early adolescent and twenty nine percent of late adolescent use or access the social networking sites via mobile phone and this is found to be the next preferred place for accessing social networking sites, followed by cafes.

Table – 5 further in continuation with the findings of the table – 5, with respect to the room preferred while using internet at home it is found that majority of both early and late adolescents prefer using their own bedroom to access the internet and visiting social networking sites. Higher percentages of early adolescents (53%) when compared to late adolescent (43%) have opted for these choices. The next preferred place by the early adolescents (37%) is the living room, in contrast to twenty six percent of late adolescent preferring to access internet and visit social networking sites from their study room. However accessing social networking site from study room is one of the least preferred choices of early adolescents and the preferred room at home for using the internet is associated and highly significant statistically (Chi – square value 15.5512**).

Table – 6 shows some interesting results with respect to the influence of social networking sites on parent – child relationship, personality factor and personal responsibilities. From the table it is clear that twenty five percent of early adolescent and thirty three percent of late adolescent engage in social networking ignoring their family and friends. A very high

percentage of early adolescents i.e. 78% of them and 50% of late adolescents are regularly reprimanded by parents and other adults for spending more time on social networking sites. A highly significant Chi – Square test value (10.4741**) also supports the highly association among the two groups. It is also seen that a higher percentage of late adolescents (43%) when compared to early adolescents (25%) engage in social networking ignoring responsibilities such as homework and other household chores. The finding is also found to be statistically significant Chi – square (4.4828*). Further it is seen that staying up late or getting up early is done by a high percentage of the respondent from both the groups however a higher percentage (88%) of early adolescents and 60% of late adolescent are found to miss out sleep because of social networking habits. The highly significant chi – square test result also shows the association between the groups (12.5697**).

With respect to not obeying parents and teacher on the account of social networking habits it is seen that 47% of late adolescents and 32% of early adolescents disobey parents and teacher’s instruction regarding using social networking site. However these differences between the groups have not been found statistically significant.

Further it is interesting to note that considerable percentage of both early and late adolescent respondents prefer to interact with people online rather than interacting face to face. A higher percentage of late adolescents (52%) are found to be in these categories as against 30% of early adolescents. The findings are also to found to be statistically significant, (Chi – Square is equal 5.829*). With respect to the number of friends, the

respondents have online and in reality it is interesting to note that higher percent from both the groups have more friends in the virtual world rather than in reality. The highly significant chi – square value also shows the association between age and number of friends online.

With respect to loosing temper when social networking sites breaks down it is again interesting to note that a very high percentage of respondents from both the groups lose their temper when social networking sites break down. However a very high percentage of early adolescents (95%) lose temper as against 62% of late adolescents. The highly significant chi – square test value (19.6399**) result also shows that age of the respondents is associated with the emotional reaction to inability to access social networking sites when required. It was hypothesized that the social networking behaviours of the early and late adolescents do not differ.

Conclusion

Social Network is one of the fastest growing segments of the internet and adolescents are the extensive users of this phenomenon called Social Networking. Adolescents use social networking for both personal and curricular active⁴ (article). Besides the Net – Generation: Adolescence is one group that is eager to know the technological advancements and latest trends. They accept these changes with open mind and at times are unable to make right habits and interest⁵ (journal). Social networking habits of adolescence hence need careful studying so that monitoring and guidance is given to this group. The present study on social networking habits off Early and Late adolescents yielded some interesting result. The study showed that 1majority of the early and late adolescents spent 2 – 3 hours

per day on social networking sites and it was found out that early adolescent have been using social networking sites from longer period of time. With respect of using social networking sites once in a day on the contrary late adolescents used social networking sites several times a day. Thus the frequency of accessing social networking sites was considerably high for both the groups. However considering the overall responses of the two groups, it is seen that the extent of usage of social networking is higher among adolescents. The study revealed that higher percentage of the early adolescent stay up late or get up early to spend more time on social networking sites and are also reprimanded by parents and other adults. On the contrary it was found out that majority of late adolescents ignore homework and other household chores due to social networking habits.

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