Psychosomatic Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society and its Subtle But Real Consequences

Abhimanyu Chopra¹, J.K. Mittal²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar Under the Supervision of Professor, J.K. Mittal, Professor Emeritus, Amity Law School, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, ²Professor, J.K. Mittal, Professor Emeritus, Amity Law School, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

The paper intends to focus on the issues of psychological and emotional impact of individuals due to excessive use of Social Networking Sites and intends to dwell into these concepts to highlight that excessive use of such sites have a substantial impact on the well-being of an individual emotionally and physically and while Social media has become immensely popular so has the mental disorderliness among young adults. The paper also brings in light the concept of 'Facebook/Insta Depression' as a concept and the rise of the this depression in young adults and some suggestions as to how avoid/deal with it.

Keywords: Psychological, Social Networking, Social Networking Sites.

Introduction

It’s good to be happy and tell us how cool your life is and how awesome you are on social media. That’s great because it inspires other people to be happy, too. But a lot of times, people are trying to be happy in the wrong ways—with money or with different things that are not true happiness. —Jaden Smith

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Orkut, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites in their daily life and practices. There exists hundreds of Social Networking Sites with various technological affordances and supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While there key technological features are fairly consistent. The cultures that emerge around Social Networking Sites are varied and are different from site to site. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing. Scholars from diverse fields have examined Social Networking Sites in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as the users’ engaged with them.

They are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. Due to the internet, the term society is not dependent upon a region as the dynamics of the internet has connected the planet as a whole and the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied and diversified.

Social Network Sites: A Definition: The definition of a Social Networking Sites is that, “Social Networking Sites are web-based services that allow individuals to

• Create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.
• Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection; and
• View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within that system”

The actuality of the reason that the researcher uses the term “Social Network Site” is to describe the observable fact, that the term “Social Networking Sites” also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. The researcher chose not
to employ the term “Networking” for two motives i.e. Emphasis and Scope.

Networking emphasizes a relationship initiation, and often among strangers wherein Networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (“CMC”).

What makes these social network sites unique are that they allow users to articulate and make visible their social networks with others and not that they allow individuals to meet strangers and these results in connections between these individuals that would not otherwise normally be made. And on many of the prominent sites the users are not necessarily “Networking” or looking to meet new people whereas, they are primarily communicating with people who they already know and they are in fact a part of their extended social network and due to this critical organizing feature of these sites, they are termed as Social Network Sites (“SNS”).

The prominent sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo for displaying on the profile. In the present day scenario, majority of the SNS provide Privacy options for displaying information and the user can control as to what information he would like to share with everyone, what he would like to share only with friends and personalize his profile in terms of security and display as far as possible. SNS’s like Orkut, Myspace and Facebook allow its users to enhance the appearance of their profiles by adding multimedia contents like songs and videos and by modifying the profile’s look and feel by their choices of colours.

A pertinent reason that Facebook started slow and suddenly shot to being a force to be reckoned with was that the ideology of Mark Zuckerberg was to change from the traditional concept and move to the new era. Facebook was the first site that allowed its user to add modules (“Applications”) all sorts to make the site more addictive and fun. An application called as Farmville which was added to the Facebook profile is one such example. This application was launched in the June 2009 and after its presence it was reported by London Today that users on Facebook come back three times a day only to play the game and that Farmville Farmers are 10:1 to the Real American Farmers. These additions are one of the primary reasons that SNSs really achieved a stand in the modern day society.

The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Orkut are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or not the viewer has an account. Whereas, Facebook takes an alternative approach and by default, allows users who are part of the same “Network” to view each other’s profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to the people in their network. These structural distinctions are one of the reasons that SNSs differentiate themselves from one another.

After making a profile on these SNSs, users are encouraged to identify others in the same system with whom they have or might have a relationship and to send invitations to those who still aren’t in the system. The labels of these relationships differs from site to site, these labels could be terms likes “Friends”, “Contacts” or “Fans”. The majority of the SNSs require bi-directional or dual confirmation for Friendship i.e. both users have to acknowledge that they know each other whereas some don’t. These one-directional ties are labelled as “Fans” or “Followers” as primarily seen in Twitter but various sites call these ties Friends as well.

The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs as the list contains links to other user’s profile and by this a user expands his network of Friends. On most sites, the Friend List is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile by the user, although there are some exceptions. For instance, Facebook and Orkut allow users to opt out of displaying their profiles.

Most of the SNSs provide a means for users to leave messages on their Friends’ profiles. This feature usually involves leaving “Scraps” or “Comments”. In addition to this form of communication many SNSs also have a private messaging feature similar to webmail or messenger chat where both private messages and comments are made. Besides and beyond Profiles, Friends, Comments and Private Messaging SNSs vary greatly in their features and their user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing competencies others have built-in microblogging and some have instant messaging technology. While SNSs are designed to be widely accessible, so it is not rare to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors.
Impact: Social Networking Sites were not less than a revolution upon their commencement. People were so easily attracted because it made relationships reach another level. People could connect virtually with everyone they knew instantly and could keep in touch and updated about their friends and family regardless to their physical position on the planet.

In India there is an old story of two brothers who get lost in a ‘Kumb Ka Mela’ and reunite after 14 years, this situation now would never happen as he could just look his brother on the net in a second. The perception has not entirely changed of how people connect and how they meet. Sites like Facebook and Twitter not only hooked children but people from all various and diverse age groups. Bollywood stars and icons like Barack Obama connect to their followers by tweets and give their views and thoughts. These sites have made such an impression on the young and the old that perception between the Real and Virtual world has now a very thin line minuscule difference.

Legal Issues: In terms of business, members may use social networks for professional development to supplement face-to-face networking, to describe business efforts and opportunities or seek advice or opinions by asking questions to the social network community. Organizations may utilize social networks to disseminate “Press Release” type information and may link back to their own website for additional details. Promoting events on Facebook can result in more rapid, widespread coverage than an organization could obtain anywhere else as notifications are sent to all of a member’s friends when that member RSVP’S for an event.

Companies may even use social networking to quickly respond to critics, such as recent ‘tweets’ (Twitter messages) by General Motors to help diffuse severe comments by government officials and the media. An even more recent example is Domino’s issuance of an apology on www.youtube.com (YouTube) in reaction to an earlier video showing two North Carolina based workers engaging in less than hygienic conduct while assembling pizzas.

Social networking activities raise legal issues around content use and infringement, defamation, attribution as well as good old-fashioned tort liability. Social networking sites are also fertile ground for garnering evidence in criminal matters and for other investigatory purposes.

Psychosomatic Impact of Social Media?: Social media has become immensely popular, and in recent year mental disorderliness among young adults has become more common. That doesn’t mean they are related but it can’t be ruled out that the causes are also not unrelated and the numbers are staggering and deserve attention. Vide a recent survey In 2018, an estimated of 66.7 million adult eighteen or older in the US had a mental unwellness of one type or the another. Young adults aged 18-25 had the highest prevalence of any mental illness at 22.1% compared to adults aged 26-49 at 21.1% and aged 50 and older at 14.5%.

A new phenomena called as “Facebook/Insta Depression” is a concern resulting from children’s use of social media. A report by the American Academy of Paediatrics defines such a depression as “depression that develops when teens and preteens spend time on social media web site and then Begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression due to the intensity of the online world.” The citron that may contribute to depression are the various measures of popularity that Facebook creates. In particular, Facebook can make kids feel inadequate due to the “in-your-face” booster tallies, status updates, and moving picture of others having a good time. For well-adjusted kids, however, social media can have the opposite effect, boosting their already positive feelings about themselves.

“Facebook depression” is a concern resulting from children’s use of social media. A report by the American Academy of Paediatrics defines Facebook depression as “depression that develops when teens and preteens spend time on social media sites and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression due to the intensity of the online world.”

The factors that may contribute to depression are the various measures of popularity that Facebook creates. In particular, Facebook can make kids feel inadequate due to the “in-your-face” friend tallies, status updates, and pictures of others having a good time. For well-adjusted kids, however, social media can have the opposite effect, boosting their already positive feelings about themselves.

In fact historically speaking the beginning of the idea of the concept of Facebook was earlier developed as a rating app by Zuckerberg along with his friends. In the year 2003, Zuckerberg along with his friends created an online programme called “Facemash”, which allowed users to objectify fellow students by comparing photos of their faces and selecting who they deemed as “hotter”.

Impact: Social Networking Sites were not less than a revolution upon their commencement. People were so easily attracted because it made relationships reach another level. People could connect virtually with everyone they knew instantly and could keep in touch and updated about their friends and family regardless to their physical position on the planet.

In India there is an old story of two brothers who get lost in a ‘Kumb Ka Mela’ and reunite after 14 years, this situation now would never happen as he could just look his brother on the net in a second. The perception has not entirely changed of how people connect and how they meet. Sites like Facebook and Twitter not only hooked children but people from all various and diverse age groups. Bollywood stars and icons like Barack Obama connect to their followers by tweets and give their views and thoughts. These sites have made such an impression on the young and the old that perception between the Real and Virtual world has now a very thin line minuscule difference.

Legal Issues: In terms of business, members may use social networks for professional development to supplement face-to-face networking, to describe business efforts and opportunities or seek advice or opinions by asking questions to the social network community. Organizations may utilize social networks to disseminate “Press Release” type information and may link back to their own website for additional details. Promoting events on Facebook can result in more rapid, widespread coverage than an organization could obtain anywhere else as notifications are sent to all of a member’s friends when that member RSVP’S for an event.

Companies may even use social networking to quickly respond to critics, such as recent ‘tweets’ (Twitter messages) by General Motors to help diffuse severe comments by government officials and the media. An even more recent example is Domino’s issuance of an apology on www.youtube.com (YouTube) in reaction to an earlier video showing two North Carolina based workers engaging in less than hygienic conduct while assembling pizzas.

Social networking activities raise legal issues around content use and infringement, defamation, attribution as well as good old-fashioned tort liability. Social networking sites are also fertile ground for garnering evidence in criminal matters and for other investigatory purposes.

Psychosomatic Impact of Social Media?: Social media has become immensely popular, and in recent year mental disorderliness among young adults has become more common. That doesn’t mean they are related but it can’t be ruled out that the causes are also not unrelated and the numbers are staggering and deserve attention. Vide a recent survey In 2018, an estimated of 66.7 million adult eighteen or older in the US had a mental unwellness of one type or the another. Young adults aged 18-25 had the highest prevalence of any mental illness at 22.1% compared to adults aged 26-49 at 21.1% and aged 50 and older at 14.5%.

A new phenomena called as “Facebook/Insta Depression” is a concern resulting from children’s use of social media. A report by the American Academy of Paediatrics defines such a depression as “depression that develops when teens and preteens spend time on social media web site and then Begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression due to the intensity of the online world.” The citron that may contribute to depression are the various measures of popularity that Facebook creates. In particular, Facebook can make kids feel inadequate due to the “in-your-face” booster tallies, status updates, and moving picture of others having a good time. For well-adjusted kids, however, social media can have the opposite effect, boosting their already positive feelings about themselves.

“Facebook depression” is a concern resulting from children’s use of social media. A report by the American Academy of Paediatrics defines Facebook depression as “depression that develops when teens and preteens spend time on social media sites and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression due to the intensity of the online world.”

The factors that may contribute to depression are the various measures of popularity that Facebook creates. In particular, Facebook can make kids feel inadequate due to the “in-your-face” friend tallies, status updates, and pictures of others having a good time. For well-adjusted kids, however, social media can have the opposite effect, boosting their already positive feelings about themselves.

In fact historically speaking the beginning of the idea of the concept of Facebook was earlier developed as a rating app by Zuckerberg along with his friends. In the year 2003, Zuckerberg along with his friends created an online programme called “Facemash”, which allowed users to objectify fellow students by comparing photos of their faces and selecting who they deemed as “hotter”.
The inception of an already psychological nightmare of young adults and especially young ladies getting rates as “who’s hot and who’s not” clearly shows the impact on a young person psyche^7^.

Even as recent as 2017-18, a game called as The Blue Whale Game/ “Blue Whale Challenge”, an Internet “game” that claimed to exist in several countries. The game allegedly consists of a series of tasks assigned to players by administrators during a 50-day period, with the final challenge requiring the player to commit suicide. The term “Blue Whale” comes from the phenomenon of beached whales, which is linked to suicide. Blue Whale began in Russia in 2013 with “F57”, one of the names of the so-called “death group” of the VKontakte social network, and allegedly caused its first suicide in 2015. Philipp Budeikin, a former psychology student who was expelled from his university, claimed that he invented the game. Budeikin stated that his purpose was to “clean” the society by pushing to suicide those he deemed as having no value and has a result of its various challenges a lot of young adults lost their lives as they committed suicide. A similar situation was seen in the 2018 “Tidepod Challenge”.

As indicated by the Pew Research Center, by 2018, 86% of adolescents had cell phones. One brain science educator at San Diego State University found that adolescents who burn through at least 5 hours per day online were 81% bound to have at any rate one hazard factor for suicide contrasted with youngsters who went through just 1 hour daily on the web. The number of social media platforms used and how often they are used is related to youth mental health. A recent study found that the more social media platforms an adolescent uses, the more likely they are to have symptoms of depression and anxiety, regardless of overall time spent on social media.^8^

It is obvious that not all social media sites are healthy environments for adolescents. Intimidation, Bullying, cliques, and sexual experimentation are just as prevalent online as offline. Because children are not good at self-regulation and are susceptible to peer pressure, social media sites can be dangerous places to “hang out” specifically if unsupervised and unregulated. While countries like United States of America and Australia are having specific statutes governing the minimum age to access social media sites is 13 because the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act prohibits websites from collecting information on children younger than 13 without parental permission. However, other countries including India doesn’t have till date a legislation regarding such determination of age, the problem is usually on the premise that age is based on self-report, so children younger than 13 can simply lie about their age and open accounts.^9^

While most parents do not fully comprehend social networking sites, one can safely say that most Indian parents don’t even consider this a valid issue of discussion within the family and, with many parents’ busy schedules, this leaves many kids unsupervised in the online world, which can lead to problems, which again is something which can and should be addressed and is not. Parental supervision is as valuable online as it is offline in instilling values and safeguards to protect a child and adolescents from Depression, Bullying and for their general well-being again both emotional and physical.

**Conclusion**

As a conclusion, it is important to understand the real and actual impact of SNS in one daily life and like any other experience in life ought to be monitored by parents, limited by children and adolescents and has to be considered as a valid issue to be discussed by friends and family. Like any real events in life such SNS interaction have far more digging consequence and with the privacy factors far more darker impact in one life which can impact anyone and in any manner.

**Ethical Clearance:** Taken from Departmental Research Committee to Amity Law School, Amity University, NOIDA, U.P.

**Source of Funding:** Self

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

**References**

3. Twitter G Motors. it is not true. Twitter.com


