

Social Media and its impact on Youth Subculture: A Comparative Study of Kumaun District.

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Citation: Sheetal Subba et al. (2024), Social Media and its impact on Youth Subculture: A Comparative Study of Kumaun District., *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1) 5136 - 5141

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i1.8685

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The modern society is distinguished by the development of new technologies in the international society; most crucially, the internet and social media that is reachable for a great audience. Information technologies and modern communication have let people immediately distribute the knowledge. Through the communication technologies including several kinds of mass media devices including electronic media, print media, and the internet, millions of people from practically everywhere in the globe are linked to each other. Particularly for the young people, social media dominates people's life in modern society. Among the children, sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp are rather familiar. Young people are developing a subculture among social networking sites thanks to their fast espousal. It is altering the way young people form opinions, meet, express and share ideas, create their life paths. Based on original data sources, the current study aims to examine how social media might help to produce a new young subculture in Kumaun city.

Keywords: Social media, Youth, Subculture.

Introduction:

In modern civilization, communication and information technology have facilitated instantaneous information sharing among individuals. Numerous individuals globally are interconnected by communication technologies, including diverse mass media devices, including electronic media, print media, and the internet. They are termed mass media due to its capacity to connect with a vast audience instantaneously. These media mediums have experienced a swift transformation. Individuals can now access newspapers online by installing an application on their mobile devices or laptops. Information technology has transformed the nature of human communication. What commenced as a personal encounter has now permeated the public sphere. Individuals participate in various activities on social media, ranging from fostering friendships on Facebook to following and communicating with others on Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. They continually enhance their profiles to sustain the engagement of their friends and fans. Social media is increasingly recognized as a financial tool for businesses, facilitating advertising and attracting potential clients. Moreover, social media is evolving as a medium for social consciousness and political discourse. Social media has impacted nearly every age demographic in society, serving as a platform for various activities. It has elevated human communication to a level where face-to-face interactions can occur via social networking sites. Such exchanges foster new power dynamics in which certain voices are amplified and more effectively heard due to increased visibility. It is apparent that social media has established a new sociological realm that requires exploration and re-evaluation. This study has been undertaken with the following aims in mind:

- To ascertain the prevalence of social media utilization among the young of Kumaun city.
- To investigate the influence of social media in promoting the emergence of new subcultures among the youth.

Social Media and Youth Subculture: Conceptual Framework

Social media is characterized as a collection of Internet-based apps that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012One. Technopedia defines Social Media as a comprehensive name encompassing many

Internet applications that enable users to generate content and engage with one another. This engagement may manifest in several forms, with prevalent types being the dissemination of links to engaging information created by external sources.

- Updates to a profile that include details on current activities and location information.
- Disseminating photographs, films, and publications.
- Providing commentary on the photographs, postings, updates, videos, and links disseminated by individuals.

The transition of society from agrarian to industrial and subsequently to an information society has initiated a new epoch characterized by the dissolution of boundaries. The extensive utilization of internet technology has effectively condensed the world into a 'global village.' Emerging tendencies at any societal stage precipitate future societal developments. The advancement of technology is influencing the values, attitudes, social interactions, and behavioral patterns of individuals, particularly the younger generation, which has rapidly adopted digital media characteristics. The primary foundation of the information society consists of nodes and networks of connectivity. Networks consist of interconnected nodes that facilitate financial transactions using technology. Nearly all developing and developed nations have experienced the rise of a network society. A tenuous and indistinct boundary exists between the real and virtual worlds, resulting in the emergence of novel possibilities in social and cultural domains. The emergence of the internet has facilitated social media, allowing individuals to maintain connections with one another. The participatory nature of digital medium, along with cameras, search engines, and notebooks, results in a growing demand for communication devices. The proliferation of social media has integrated it into the daily lives of individuals. In contemporary civilization, media encompasses not only transmission but also interactivity, multimedia, and multitasking. Real-time messaging can influence changes in attitude among individuals. Technology has proven pivotal in influencing public opinion. Social media serves as a platform for individuals to maintain connections with friends, rekindle relationships with former acquaintances, and establish genuine friendships with unfamiliar individuals or those residing at a distance, facilitated by shared interests, hobbies, and perspectives. Globally, individuals are dedicating significant amounts of time to social media via smartphones. The widespread accessibility of smartphones facilitates social media usage among individuals. The user base is expanding daily. Social media influences youth in nearly every facet of their lives, fostering unique styles, behaviors, and interests, and providing them with a subcultural identity different from their ascribed identity.

Subculture refers to a social group within a larger community that possesses a lifestyle distinct from the overarching culture. The members of these groups possess diverse preferences in attire, music, and lifestyle. However, they are not entirely dissimilar to other members of society. Individuals have the option to join a certain youth culture. Subcultures serve as significant sources of social identity. The internet and social media are currently significant agents of change in people's lives. New technology is undoubtedly exerting a huge influence on culture. The swift progress in digital technology has united netizens more closely. Social media enables engagement among individuals from many cultures. It is developing into a forum for the seamless flow of ideas, cultural values, and perspectives. It offers a medium for individuals to interact with family, friends, casual acquaintances, and even strangers. This technology is utilized significantly by social and political movements to further their objectives. The culture of daily living is now profoundly intertwined with social media. The emergence of online dating platforms is transforming the manner in which individuals form their meaningful connections. Social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate the convergence of individuals from many origins and cultures, so contributing to the emergence of a new culture. The increasing significance of the virtual world is influencing how individuals manage their daily activities. It has gained prominence in the contemporary world due to its facilitation of convenient and effective global communication. The integration of the virtual and the real constitutes the essence of contemporary culture. The influence of the internet, particularly social media, has profoundly altered the lives of young people.

Social Media and Youth subculture: Theoretical framework

Social media has become an essential component of contemporary young culture. It is a pervasive force that exerts a profound impact on the kids. This generation's youth is referred to by various titles, including net generation, millennial generation, and digital natives. These tags signify a substantial demographic, particularly those who matured during the era characterized by the proliferation of the internet and a media-saturated landscape, with social media emerging as the predominant influence.

Through the utilization of these venues, the youth are progressively attaining empowerment. They can transcend geographical constraints by engaging with individuals of particular interests. Social media is utilized for social interaction, e-commerce, dating, online gaming, and business marketing, among other purposes. They serve as co-producers for extensive worldwide audiences through their creative online presentations. Online engagement differs significantly from offline activities. The adolescents involved in an online community may be geographically distant, experiencing varying time zones, yet they share same interests, similar activities, and a sense of belonging. This virtual realm allows individuals to articulate their authentic or inner selves due to the anonymity provided by the internet. Individuals utilize the internet to

perform traditional activities in innovative manners. The emergence of new media enhances active engagement and the production of media content. Individuals are passive consumers of content and online information. The online engagement in specific activities is fostering cultural transformations and the establishment of new subcultures among the youth. This research analyzes the influence of social media on youth through the lens of Gerbner's Cultivation theory

Theory of Cultivation

Formulated by George Gerbner in 1967, the Cultivation theory posits that prolonged media exposure significantly influences individuals and might modify their perceptions of daily life. Television viewers are often influenced by media messages and often emulate them in their real lives. Gerbner contends that audiences utilize media to validate their perceptions of reality. The media's imagery fosters prevailing tendencies in nature, including cultural beliefs, ideologies, and perspectives. Proponents of this idea assert that television viewing can exert a lasting influence that progressively impacts the audience. A significant number of television viewers are believed to be developing mindsets that perceive the televised world as an accurate representation of reality. Theorists categorized the consequences of culture into two distinct levels: the first pertains to a general belief regarding the real world, while the second relates to specific attitudes, such as animosity or reverence for law and order. The cultivation of attitudes relies on existing societal norms, with media reinterpreting these pre-existing views for their consumers. The audience often remains oblivious to the degree of their media cultivation. The idea was first formulated to examine the impact of television on its viewers, but it is equally applicable in modern culture, which encompasses various media types, particularly social media. Social media has become an integral aspect of individuals' lives. It has significantly altered the everyday routines of individuals who dedicate considerable time to social media. Individuals assimilate the prevailing images, trends, and messages disseminated through social media. Frequent engagement with social media fosters the development of its customs and culture among individuals. They incorporate them into their real-world views and evaluations.

Research Methodology

The chosen area for the study is urban Kumaun. The rationale for selection is because Kumaun serves as a center for prominent educational and technological institutions, with several young individuals enrolled in these establishments. Consequently, it serves as a suitable venue to examine the effects of social media on adolescents. The universe encompasses individuals aged 18 to 30 years. The sample size consists of 250 respondents, including both males and females. The purposive sampling method has been employed. Data collection employed both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was gathered using a standardized questionnaire. The study's research questions are as follows:

Q1. To what degree do young individuals utilize social networking sites?

Q.2. Is social media fostering new cultural paradigms in Indian society?

The study's findings are presented below:

Sample characteristics

The respondents' ages range from 18 to 30 years. Thirty percent of respondents are aged 18-21 years, twenty-six percent are aged 21-24 years, twenty-three point two percent are aged 24-27 years, and twenty point eight percent are aged 27-30 years. Ten percent of users fall within the low-income category, defined as having a monthly family income below Rs. 20,000. Twenty-five percent belong to the monthly income bracket of Rs. 20,000-50,000, another twenty-five percent are in the Rs. 50,000-80,000 range, and forty percent of respondents have an income of Rs. 80,000 or higher. Additionally, it was discovered that 39 percent of respondents possess over 900 friends on their social network accounts. The previous number of pals was significantly smaller (15-20) in comparison to this figure. Prior to the emergence of social media, friendships were established in the physical world. These have been supplanted by virtual experiences devoid of foundation. Baudrillard: 1983 6.

I) Extent of usage

Diagram 1.1: Popular Social networking sites

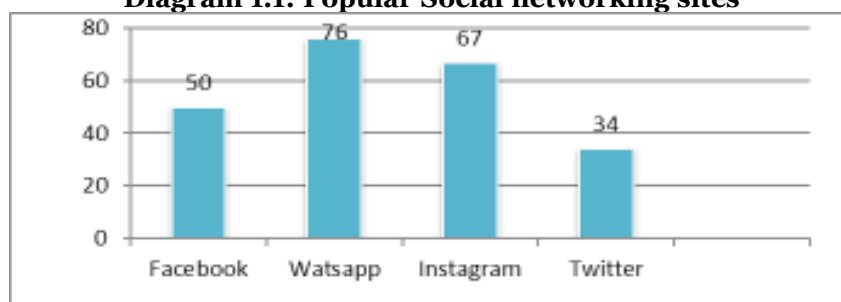


Diagram 1.1 indicates that WhatsApp is the most prevalent messaging application among youth, with 76 percent of respondents identifying as active users. It enables users to connect with one another instantaneously via telephone. The WhatsApp call feature provides a significant benefit, as it facilitates both domestic and international communication. Instagram is the preferred platform for 67 percent of respondents, whilst Twitter is utilized by only 38 percent. The younger respondents exhibit greater activity on Facebook, comprising 50 percent of users. This response aligns with the increasing inclination of youth to share their interests and exhibit their creativity, for which Instagram serves as an excellent platform. Responses indicate that individuals are increasingly inclined to explore newer and lesser-known platforms on the Internet, such as Telegram, Viber, and Hike.

II) Role of Social networking sites in creating a new youth subculture

Diagram 1.2: Views on marriage

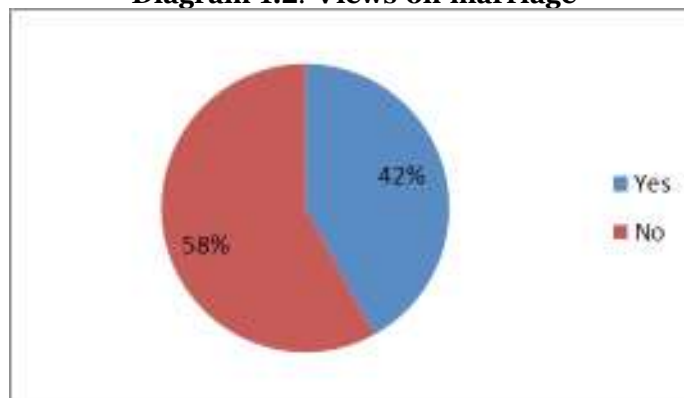


Diagram 1.2 indicates that 58 percent of respondents prioritize profession and freedom over marriage. For some individuals, commitment is intimidating, making casual dating the preferable option. They choose to cohabit rather than enter into matrimony. The availability of applications such as Tinder, Truly Madly, and Happn facilitates a more convenient avenue for rapid encounters. Despite the extensive market for relationships provided by social media through dating platforms, it is perceived that casual dating, cohabitation, and a permissive environment have diminished the necessity for marriage. A significant portion of youth opposes the concept of marriage, indicating that social media has emerged as a potent influence on marital choices.

Diagram 1.3: Use of Social media for educational purpose

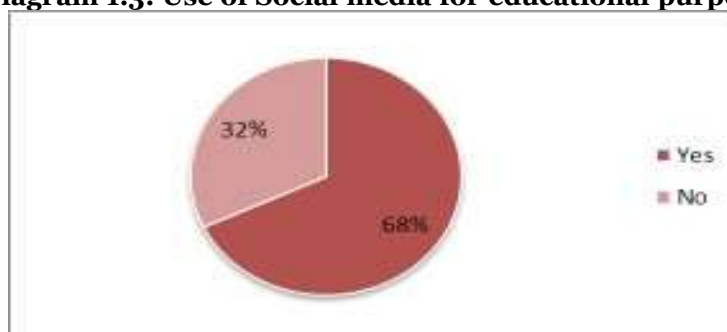


Diagram 1.3 indicates that 68 percent of youth utilize social media for educational purposes. The utilization of social media for educational purposes include the capacity to access information, engage with learning communities, and interact with other educational institutions. Social media facilitates access to numerous video lectures by professionals, enabling learners to engage and communicate both within and outside the classroom. Social media has expanded formal education beyond conventional methods of delivery. Social media provides a platform to augment the learning experience.

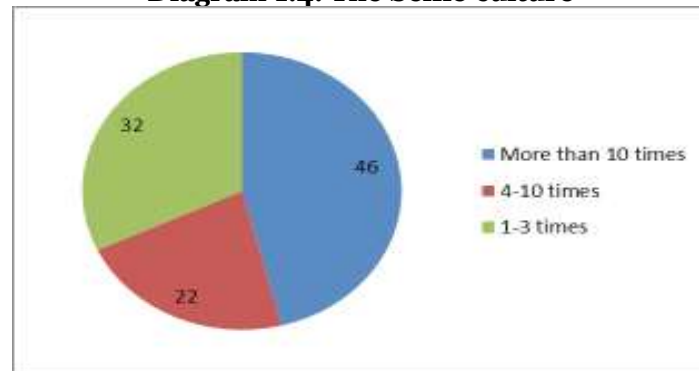
Diagram 1.4: The Selfie culture

Diagram 1.4 illustrates that 32 percent of respondents take selfies 1-3 times daily, 22 percent take selfies 4-10 times daily, and 46 percent take selfies more than 10 times daily. The act of taking selfies and disseminating them on social networking platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, and Snapchat signifies self-expression. Selfies are captured for numerous purposes. Some view them as a means to commemorate an anniversary or to share an event or accomplishment, but others perceive them as a manifestation of narcissism. Selfies have emerged as the contemporary method for chronicling life.

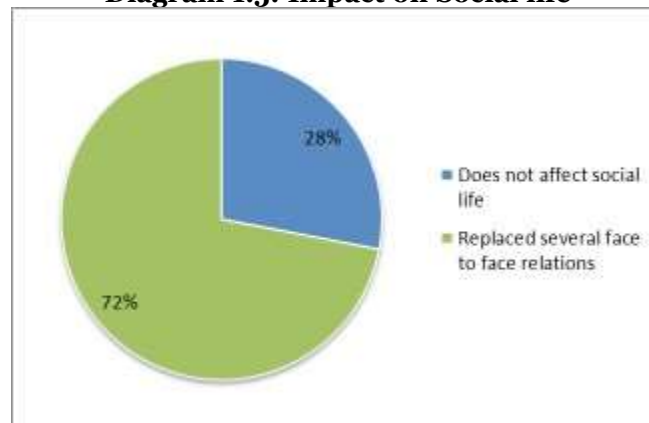
Diagram 1.5: Impact on Social life

Diagram 1.5 indicates that 72 percent of respondents believe that social networking platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have negatively impacted their social lives. Nevertheless, 28 percent report differently. They believe that social networking sites enhance their connection with one another. Although social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter facilitate immediate access to information, digital interactions lack the closeness seen in real-world relationships. Social media has supplanted in-person relationships with virtual connections.

Conclusion

Social media is a web-based technology that fosters and enables interaction among individuals over a shared network, typically the internet. As social media has been ingrained in the daily lives of a growing population, it significantly influences the activities, social relationships, and perspectives of the younger generation. The research conducted on a selected group of teenagers in Kumaun city indicates that social media is increasingly becoming a significant facilitator in the establishment and maintenance of connections. Social networking platforms such as WhatsApp (76% of users) and Instagram (67% of users) are the most prevalent among young, followed by Facebook and Twitter with 50% and 34% of users, respectively. The pervasive utilization of social media directly influences interpersonal connections. The quality of interaction within intimate groups has declined, leading to ineffective communication and disjointed relationships. The utilization of social media is impacting societal institutions such as marriage, family, politics, and education. The proliferation of liberal values is diminishing the institutional significance of marriage, leading to alternative kinds of cohabitation. The Anti-Natalist attitude is gaining traction among the youth, for whom procreation has become an option rather than a necessity. Social media serves as a venue for disseminating such views. Education has diminished in its customary fervor due to a significant paradigm shift in the educational landscape. The teaching-learning process is no longer confined to physical spaces; social media serves as a significant medium for the global transmission of knowledge. Social media serves not only as a medium for education but also as a venue for expressing opinions and addressing issues and concerns. It has changed the political engagement of youth, who have discovered a platform to express and promote their

political opinions. Social media has significantly altered modes of expression and lifestyle behaviors. A novel social media lexicon is emerging, characterized by acronyms, emoticons, and memes to convey diverse emotions. The market society resulting from globalization has accelerated through social media, transforming the essence and character of markets. Social media not only facilitates product delivery to doorsteps but also significantly impacts the purchasing decisions and behaviors of the youth. Moreover, platforms such as Facebook and Instagram enable users to gain insight into the lives and lifestyles of celebrities, who serve as their role models for refining their tastes and reorganizing their wardrobes. The most notable consequence of social media is the emergence of Selfie Culture, which has introduced a new facet to cultural dynamics. Social media has afforded the kids a forum to express many personas influenced by their changing moods. High-tech smartphones and social media have collectively emerged as instruments for youth identity building. It is clear that social media significantly influences values, attitudes, and social patterns. Conduct of the youth. The study's findings align with Gerbner's cultivation hypothesis (1967), which posits that continuous media exposure influences individuals and modifies their perceptions. Weber (2006) posited that rationalization will result in a dehumanized and alienated society in which technology supersedes human knowledge and emotions. Social media is transforming contemporary youngsters into passive receivers of knowledge and information, predominantly disinclined to question its content. Social media, a human invention, has begun to dominate its creator. Social media has effectively established a global community, enabling individuals from other cultures to connect instantaneously. Moreover, it has transformed individuals' lifestyles, language, perspectives, and the structure of interpersonal connections, resulting in a new set of values and beliefs. Social media has evolved as a potent instrument of change. The expansion of social media has transformed communication tactics and lifestyle patterns, particularly among youth, leading to new forms of cultural ideas and behaviors.

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