Consequences of Social Media in the Everyday Life of People: A Case Study of Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

Social networking has become one of the most important trends of the contemporary society that influenced its members' communication experiences and perception of reality. This research aims to establish the outcomes of social media use in the lives of the people residing in Ward No. 16 of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Social media in particular allows for a broad study of the effects on different parameters the essence of the social interactions among the users of social media, their psychological state, and their ways of obtaining and sharing information. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used, quantitative and questionnaire based survey and qualitative and interview based survey with 57 respondents. The ideas proposed in this research show that it points to the model of the positive and negative effects, which is the characteristic of social networks as means of communication at the same time. Arguably, the literature suggests that social media results in high consequences in the lives of users with lower age, female gender, lower levels of education, and unmarried statuses. These nuances are discussed in the analysis as a means of providing more information about how people of different age, gender, education level, and marital status perceive the impact of social media. This paper therefore emphasizes the need for people to be conversant with digital literacy, and the need to be cautious when using social media so as to avoid the negative impacts while enjoying the positive ones.

Introduction

Social media is commonly known as internet-based tools that enable users to create as well as share content in the society. Social media helps to increase the levels of contact and sustains ties across great distances. In a way, it contributes to social capital enhancement since the users are able to contact different groups and thus, build both bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2000). Also, procuring social support and community through the internet, especially through the applications such as Facebook and instagram (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell, 2011). On the other hand, negative outcomes of the social media include social isolation and reduced social interactions in interpersonal relationships (Primack et al. 2017).

Turkle (2011) claims that with the help of social networking sites, people become less mindful of each other, which degrades face-to-face communication. However, comparison seems to be

continuous following the creation of many social media accounts and it causes the feeling of low self-esteem according to Vogel et al, 2014.

Social networks can be useful for the improvement of people's mental health as they allow to share experiences and receive support (Wang, 2015). Virtual social networks give people the feeling that they are included in some group of society even if they are outcasts (DeAndrea et al., 2012). Nonetheless, many papers emphasize the potential impact of social media on the negative health consequences throughout the published literature. In a systematic review conducted by Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020), evidence obtained from research studies reveals a positive relationship between SMD and anxiety, depression and stress. Facebook depression has been reported to affect adolescents mostly (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Also, FOMO intensifies the experience of loneliness and anxiety (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013).

If adopted, social media quickly and easily disseminates news (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010). Twitter has been used as a tool of gathering people for social movements and enhancing citizenship (Bennett, & Segerberg, 2012). In addition, social networking turns to being an informative platform through which everyone gets to be informed and embraced with all the information and materials that they require (Greenhow, 2011). However, the main issues are the spread of fake news and misinformation. Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018) showed that, as a result of the tendency of the algorithm, fake news disseminates more actively than authentic news. This problem is magnified by the echo chamber effect since users are only exposed to information that is similar to what they already believe (Sunstein, 2001).

Interacting with the literatures that have touched on the issues of social media, it is apparent noticeable that social media has a profound impact on the day-to-day life of human beings with benefits as well as the adverse effects. On the positive side it creates contact and the possibility of sharing information but it also has negative impacts on mental health and the quality of human relations. This fact underlines the importance of a more refined approach to the analysis of social media's position of the modern society.

Statement of the Problem

Social media penetration in the society has changed the vane of the society in a conspicuous manner and bears a huge influence in the social relations, communicational modes and even sensory experiences of the people of Kathmandu Valley, Particularly Ward No: 16. As much as social media applications can increase the possibilities for better connection and act as a source of information share and support, it has significant threats too. These dangers range for social isolation, decline in mental health, and passing of fake information. Given that social media has positive and negative characteristics, it is essential to analyze all the possible outcomes of its use for the residents of this community. This paper aims at filling this gap by examining the various and complex ways through which social media affects different dimensions of people's lives including social relations, psychological well-being, and information sharing. In addition, it seeks to establish the way demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and marital status affect these end results. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, this research will provide positive and negative outcomes of using social media and the underlying social relations consequently contributing to the understanding of the dynamics in society. The aim is to provide recommendations on 'how' organizations and businesses can go about teaching employees how to increase the positive impact of digital reading and reflection and reduce the negative outcomes of social media use.

Research Questions

1. What are the positive and negative consequences of social media on the everyday lives of residents in Ward No. 16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City?
2. How do demographic factors such as age, gender, educational level, and marital status influence the consequences of social media usage?

Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the positive and negative consequences of social media on the everyday lives of residents in Ward No. 16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City.
2. To examine the influence of demographic factors on the consequences of social media usage.

Significance of the Study

Thus, the relevance of this study lies in the fact that it offers insights into the subject of how social media affects everyday life in the city. The strengths of the research lie in the fact that the study is contextualized on a particular ward in Kathmandu; therefore, the findings and recommendations of the study can be locally applied in tackling the issue. It will be insightful for deciding authorities, teachers/educators, and counselors/psychologists focused onto favorable social media usage. Moreover, the report enriches the methodological sociological discussion on the use of digital media in today's society, stressing on the suitable use of digital media with careful analysis.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to note several limitations that were featured in this study. One area of strength though, is the number of respondents that participated in the study amounted to 57, which were drawn from a only one ward in the Kathmandu Valley hence; the results may not be generalized to the entire area. Also, investigating social media usage and its effects through self-report measures could be influenced by response biases such as social desirable responding. The methodology used in the work is also cross-sectional; therefore, it does not allow for observing long-term consequences. Further research should aim at recruiting more participants in the sample and involving a more diverse population and designs that incorporate longitudinal features.

Methods

Research Design

In this study, the mixed-method research design was used in an attempt to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data collecting instruments. The study methodology involved quantitative and qualitative data collection tools such as questionnaire comprised of closed and some open-ended questions administered to 57 residents of Ward No. 16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Demographic data and information on the use of social networks were obtained in the survey, which can be supplemented by the results of interviews that reveal the subject's attitude towards the issue.

Results

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Age Group	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
18-25	15.8	19.3	35.1
26-35	10.5	12.3	22.8
36-45	7.0	7.0	14.0
46-55	5.3	5.3	10.6
56 and above	8.8	8.8	17.6

The table above shows that the majority of respondents were in the 18-25 age group, comprising 35.1% of the total sample. The least represented age group was 46-55, with only 10.6% of the respondents. Gender distribution was relatively balanced across all age groups.

Social Media Usage Patterns

Table 2 presents the data on the frequency of social media use among the respondents.

Table 2

Frequency of Social Media Use

Frequency of Use	Percentage (%)
Several times a day	70.2
Once a day	12.3
A few times a week	10.5
Once a week or less	7.0

The majority of respondents used social media several times a day, accounting for 70.2% of the sample. Only 7% of the respondents used social media once a week or less.

Consequence on Social Relationships

The perceived consequence of social media on social relationships is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Consequence of Social Media on Social Relationships

Consequence on Social Relationships	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
Increased connectivity	52.6	21.1	26.3
Decreased quality of face-to-face interactions	29.8	54.4	15.8
Strengthened online communities	47.4	17.5	35.1

Table 3 indicates that while 52.6% of respondents felt that social media increased connectivity, 54.4% believed it decreased the quality of face-to-face interactions. Strengthened online communities were noted by 47.4% of the respondents.

Consequence on Mental Health

The consequence of social media on mental health is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Consequence of Social Media on Mental Health

Consequence on Mental Health	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
Improved well-being through emotional support	40.4	28.1	31.5
Increased anxiety and depression	36.8	49.1	14.1
Feelings of inadequacy due to comparisons	28.1	52.6	19.3

According to the different variables introduced in the previous section, the table obtained reveals that 40. 4% of the respondents testified to enhance well-being through emotional support through social media, 49. 1% said that their levels of anxiety and depression had risen. The major significantly outcome was the experience of inadequate example, endorsed by 52 percent of the sample populace. 6% of the respondents.

Discussion

Therefore, the study reveals that the consequence of social media in the everyday life of Ward No.16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan city is diverse and has various implications. Thus, the outcomes of the investigated associations are twofold, implying both benefits and harms of social media utilization in the various spheres.

Social connectedness was pointed out as one of the most significant positive outcomes as far as the participants in the survey were concerned. Through connecting and interacting with friends and acquaintances, SNS lets users sustain their social ties across great distances, and interact with a large number of people from various backgrounds, which implies that they contribute to both bonding and bridging social capital. This is particularly appreciated in Blessed territories like the Kathmandu where social relations are usually fragmented. Also, concerning the perceived support which can be a part of social media meaning, the social connections and support that are offered to the users by various online platforms were mentioned by many of the respondents thus showing the significance of social media in creating and maintaining virtual communities.

But in the same study, negative outcomes of social media usage were observed as well. It was evident that many respondents agreed with the statement indicating that the use of social media interfered with the quality of interpersonal communications to a certain extent. This finding supports Turkle's (2011) opinion that, through social networking sites, people only get generic relationships and this hinders the richness of normal interactions. Interacting on social media also creates a place where people feel they are constantly in a competition to see who is worthy to be accepted among other people, this makes people have low self-esteem. This was more so evident among the young they are always under pressure due to the social networks they are constantly in.

The impact on mental health, which social media has been found to have, was also found to be just as problematic in this sample. Some of the respondents found comfort in the communities, gaining emotional support, and a sense of belonging, but the majority of them said that they became more anxious and depressed as they used the social platforms. The generation drew attention to the social media activity drag and the fear of missing out (FOMO) as some of the leading causes of the said mental health effects. This is in line with research showing the negative impact that social media has on the mental health of users especially the youths and college going individuals (Keles et al., 2020).

Demographically, it was also seen that the consequence of social media also differed. Gen Y was more likely both to state positive and negative effects because they are more active users of social media. Differences were also noted concerning gender, with females recognizing increased feelings of incompetence at work and males perceiving decreased quality of face to face communication. The perceived consequences were also affected by the educational level and marital status, especially regarding the perceived risk and opportunity as well as the usage frequency of social media sites.

Such conclusions demonstrate the need to encourage people to attain digital literacy along with responsible social media usage. Some of the negative effects that have been pointed out in this study can be reduced through awareness creation regarding the threats and promotion of appropriate usage patterns concerning social media. Also, creating the situations that would encourage the effective additional offline communicative contact must be considered as a factor that contributes to the enhancement of social existence of the social networks' members in both, online and offline contexts.

Conclusion

Therefore, this study reveals the impact of social media in the day-to-day life of the people residing at Ward No. 16 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. The study shows that the impact of social media is a two-sided coin, as the utilisation of social networks has reactions, which are either beneficial or negative, concerning various spheres of life. Social networks increase communication and serve as tools for sharing emotions and forming communities but at the same time, they negatively affect face-to-face interactions and are the cause of low self-esteem and mental health problems.

The study also reveals the importance of social media in the contemporary society to increase the understanding of the phenomenon. Despite the benefits that are provided by social networks, one cannot ignore the negative aspects that have appeared due to the active use of social media. To combat these negative effects increasing awareness concerning the use of digital technology or improving digital citizenship and moderating use are important processes. Also helpful for social life can be strengthening offline social activities, for people to get real social experience while using the internet too.

The problems of this study are the sample size of the investigated population, the cross-sectional study design; it can be suggested that there is a necessity of further investigation of the impacts of social media use on the identified factors and similar issues in various settings. Further research focusing on this topic should incorporate huge and diversified subject populations and carry out longitudinal studies to extend the outcomes of the present research.
Thus, it enriches the general sociological discussion on the place of digital media in

postindustrial society, and furnishes detailed findings that can help in situ-specific interventions in Kathmandu. The positive as well as negative impacts elaborated in the paper can help foster awareness among the stakeholders in order to enhance its advantages and reduce its disadvantages, in an attempt to improve healthier and more balanced usage of social media.

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