

# Use of Social Media Among Youth: The Reflection of Structuration Theory

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## Abstract

*The research reveals the views of youngsters on the usage of social media. The use of social media by youngsters has grown in popularity in contemporary society. The study performed a targeted questionnaire survey with high school, undergraduate, and graduate students from various public and private educational institutions to better understand the role that social media platforms play in the lives of young people and how they utilize them. Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, which stresses the effect of social systems on individual behavior, served as the study's theoretical foundation. The study's findings revealed that individual agency (young people's interests and motives for using social media) and structures (such as accessible platforms and the laws and norms regulating their usage) shape and impact each other in the use of social media by youth. Young people must be informed of the possible advantages and hazards of social media and utilize it properly. We expect that this research will add to a better understanding of the influence of social media on young people's communication, relationships, and general well-being.*

**Keywords:** user relationships, traverse relationship, cyberbullying & information life.

## Introduction

The history of social media has been divided into two eras: the broad castage and the interactive age. During the broadcast period, media was almost fully centralized, with a single institution disseminating messages to a huge number of people. Media feedback was typically indirect, delayed, and impersonal (The evolution of media, 2016). The phrase "social media" refers to websites and programs that emphasize communication, community-based input, engagement, sharing of content, and collaboration. People utilize social media to remain in touch with friends, family, and members of various networks (Lutkevich & Wigmore, 2021).

Social media is a type of internet-based communication. Users of social networking sites may hold discussions, exchange information, and produce web content. Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and other types of social media exist (Sengar, 2021)

Scholars have characterized and examined the usage of social media among teenagers in a variety of ways. Some academics have focused on how social media platforms may improve communication and connection, helping young people to create and sustain ties with friends, family, and other people. Other researchers have investigated the significance of social media in the formation of young people's identity and sense of self, as well as how it

influences their self-presentation and self-esteem. Scholars have characterized and examined the usage of social media among teenagers in a variety of ways. Some academics have focused on how social media platforms may improve communication and connection, helping young people to create and sustain ties with friends, family, and other people. Other researchers have investigated the significance of social media in the formation of young people's identity and sense of self, as well as how it influences their self-presentation and self-esteem (Boyd & Ellison, 2010a).

Social media has been characterized as websites that allow the development of profiles and the visibility of user relationships (Boyd & Ellison, 2010b); web-based apps that give functionality for sharing, relationships, groups, conversations, and accounts (Kietzmann et al., 2011). "Social media outlets" (Diga & Kelleher, 2009) or a collection of information technologies that allow interactions and networking (Kapoor et al., 2017; Oestreicher-Singer & Zalmanson, 2013) have been used to describe digital platforms. According to "Social Media Network," focusing of social media sites:

Social networking has become a fundamental platform not just of twenty-first-century information life, but also of life itself for billions of people. There are general networked sociality sites that encompass almost all human activities, such as Facebook, Tweeter, and Google+. There are also more specialized sites that focus on a certain aspect of social activity, such as LinkedIn for business and profession or A Small World for travel and elitism. There are also social media features built in many internet sites and services, such as comment areas, which have now become their own gatherings on YouTube channels. Social media, or social media networks, are an important part of virtual life, having offered a new form for what were previously referred to as "digital environments"(Jordan, 2015:120).

It is obvious that young people's usage of social media has the potential to have both good and bad effects. As young people use social media platforms to interact and engage with others more often, bullying in general and cyberbullying in particular have grown to be major concerns. While navigating the difficulties of developing and upholding a healthy online presence, young people must also take into account issues of digital identity and the development of digital footprints. Negative outcomes from careless social media use may include the dissemination of offensive material or a breach of privacy. Young people should be aware of these possible threats and take precautions to safeguard their personal information and online reputations. (Martin et al., 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Giddens, behaviors are repeated and persistent, resulting in the social reproduction of recognizable systems and structures. As "tacitly executed practices," social activity and interaction develop "institutions or routines" that "reproduce known patterns of social life" (Cohen, p. 94).

The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across space and time.

Human social activities, like some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive. That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible. (Giddens, 1984:2).

The core area of research in the social sciences, according to structuration theory, is the examination of social activities that are arranged in a spatial and temporal hierarchy. These behaviors are recursive, which means that social actors frequently repeat and replicate them through various forms of expression and communication. This idea contends that young people continuously develop and redefine social media practices via their usage of these platforms, rather than merely adopting them. This theory is relevant to the use of social media among youth. As a result, it is possible to interpret young people's social media usage as a reflection of their lives, identities, and social networks as well as the wider cultural institutions that shape their behavior.

This method allows Giddens to integrate human social activity with the wider systems, structures, and institutions that we are a part of. Sociologists define bigger social forms as the continuous repeating of social action and interaction in regular and habitual patterns (Layder, 2005). This structuration viewpoint contrasts from Durkheim's external and coercive social realities, in which structures appear to have a continuing existence independent from the person and have a major deciding impact on individual conduct (Durkheim, 2016).

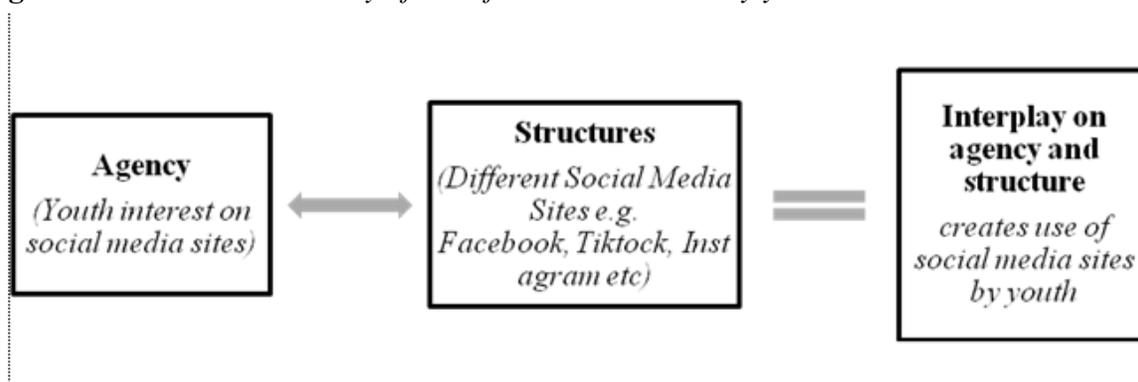
The investigation of social activities that are organized across place and time is the fundamental area of research in the social sciences, according to the structuration hypothesis. Recursive means that social actors constantly recreate and replicate these activities through various forms of expression and communication. This theory proposes that social media practices are continuously formed and remade by young people via their use of these platforms, rather than being merely embraced by them in the context of social media use among youth. Young people's social media usage may therefore be seen as a reflection of their upbringing, identities, and social networks as well as the wider cultural institutions that shape their behavior (Stones, 2005).

The structuration theory of Anthony Giddens has obvious appeal for strategy-as-practice academics. His interpretation of human agency emphasizes that people's actions are significant. Structure and agency are combined in the concept of structuration to give them flow - continuity while also allowing for structural change (Whittington, 2010). Human beings are both produced and makers. The balance between the notions of 'creators' and 'created' reflects society and its growth. The argument over whether social life is organized or structured social life has persisted since the beginning of sociology. Many sociologists have worked over the last three decades to track sociology by moderating the dispute through the coupling of agency and structural viewpoints (K.C., 2000).

Recognizing the formation and maintenance of social order is at the heart of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. According to this idea, social order is produced through

routine behaviors and institutionalized behaviors of people and groups that are connected to one another over time and place. The position-practices, or the interaction of people and technology, that shape social systems and structures, are emphasized by structural theory. Numerous historical and sociological factors have an impact on these position-practices, and they interact with one another to help reproduce and uphold social order. In a nutshell, structuration theory aims to comprehend how individuals within social systems work and interact to build and preserve those systems.

**Figure 1:** *Structuration Theory of use of social media site by youth*



**Source:** Created through the extraction of theoretical proposition through book – “Anthony Giddens. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration.* University of California Press.”

According to structural theory, social structures, such as institutions, norms, and regulations, and individual agency, which refers to people's decisions and actions, are interrelated and influence one another. In the context of youth and social media, this means that while the youth's interests and reasons for using social media are influenced by the platforms that are available and the rules that govern their use, the youth's decisions and behaviors on social media can also have an impact on the platforms' structures and how they are used by others. Youth's usage of social media sites is ultimately influenced by the interaction between agency and structure.

**Objectives**

The overarching goal of this study is to comprehend young perceptions of social media use via the prism of structuration theory. This can entail looking at the ingrained routines and institutionalized behaviors of young people on social media. This research aims to shed light on the role that social media plays in the lives of young people and how it may be affecting their communication, relationships, and general well-being by analyzing the attitudes and behaviors of youth toward social media use through the framework of structuration theory.

**Method**

The researchers in this study collected primary data through an online survey using a Google form and a targeted questionnaire. The survey was completed by 109 high school, undergraduate, and graduate students selected purposively from various public and private

educational institutions. The research had both descriptive and analytical purposes, and the collected data was processed and analyzed to draw conclusions and provide insights into the attitudes and behaviors of young people towards social media use. This method allowed the researchers to gather in-depth information from a specific sample of young people and examine their perspective on social media use in detail.

### Limitations

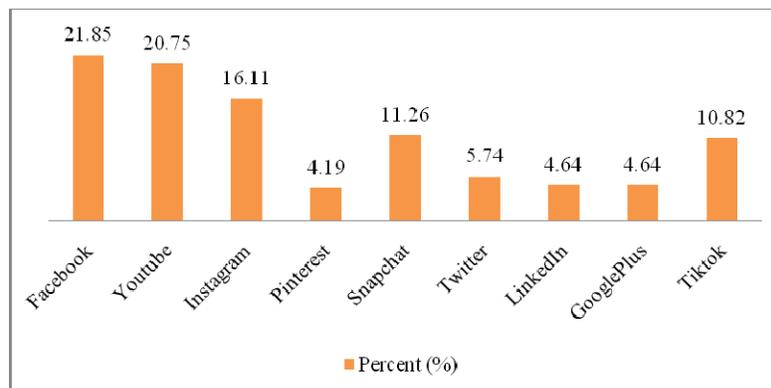
In order to accurately represent young students, the researchers in this study employed a purposive sample technique to choose a small number of institutions in the Kathmandu and Bardiya districts. Due to time and resource constraints, the study was unable to examine the usage of social media by all teenagers and instead concentrated on those attending three to four institutions. The results may not be as broadly applicable to the larger number of young people who utilize social media as a result.

### Result and Discussion

#### Number of youth using social media tools

Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have ingrained themselves into the daily lives of young people. They give them a means of connecting with friends, family, and classmates as well as giving them access to a variety of information and entertainment. These technologies also provide young people the chance to share their thoughts and express themselves artistically.

**Figure 2:** Number of youth using different social media tools



**Source:** Field Survey, 2022

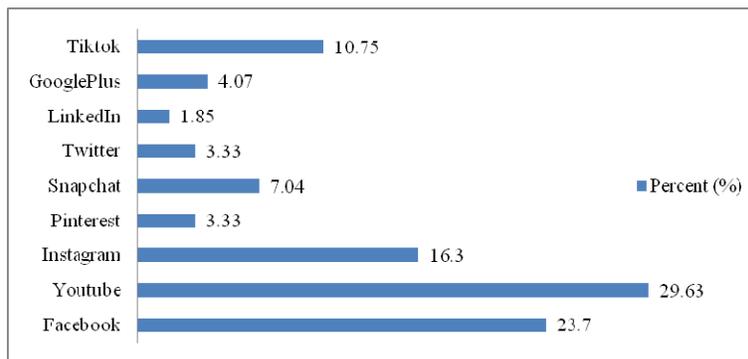
The figure 2 shows information on the frequency of social media use among the 109 young people who participated in the study's survey. According to the research, a sizable portion of this generation of young people utilize Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, Tiktok, LinkedIn, and GooglePlus. The most often used platform was Facebook, which was reported by 21.85% of respondents. With 20.75% of respondents indicating use, Youtube was the second-most popular site, while Instagram ranked third with 16.11%. In the topic of youth and social media, a sizable proportion of young respondents use a range of social media sites, the most popular of which are Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Individual agency can be evident in these social media decisions, as young people have the ability to pick which platforms to use and how to use them. Simultaneously, the availability and popularity of these platforms may be considered as instances of structure, since they offer the framework within which young people make their decisions.

**Social media tool used by youth mostly**

Having over two billion monthly users, or around 36.9% of the world's population, Facebook is the most popular social networking platform. It was first introduced in 2004 and has since become an indispensable component of many people's everyday lives. YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram each have 2.2 billion, 2 billion, and 2 billion users, respectively. TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter, and LinkedIn have also grown their user bases to 1 billion, 538 million, 436 million, and 250 million, respectively. These platforms have enabled individuals to communicate with one another, share information, and access a variety of content. In the digital era, they have become a crucial element of how we communicate and obtain information. These platforms have all gained a significant following and have become an important part of how we communicate and access information. (Lua, 2022).

**Figure 3** *Distribution of Social media tool used by youth mostly*



**Source: Field Survey, 2022**

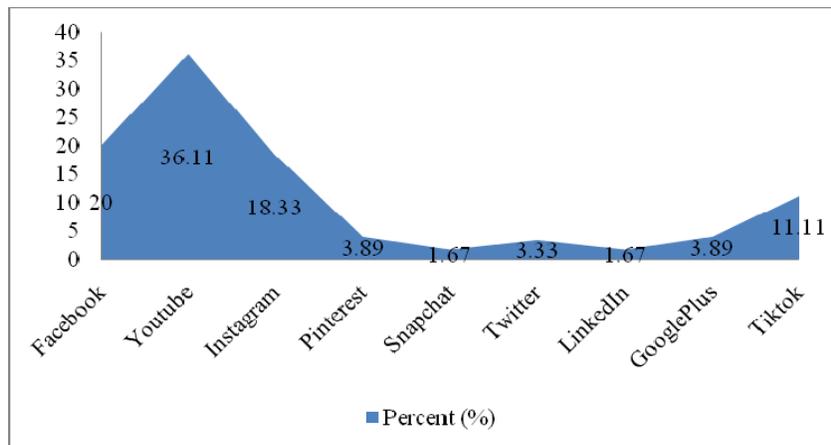
The figure 3 above shows the clear picture on number of youth using social media tools mostly on the surveyed area. According to the research, many of these young people utilize social media, with Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram being the most widely used services. Particularly, 23.7% of respondents said they primarily used Facebook, 29.63% said they primarily used Youtube, and 16.3% said they primarily used Instagram.

Individual agency can be evident in these social media decisions, as young people have the ability to pick which platforms to use and how to use them. Simultaneously, the availability and popularity of these platforms may be considered as instances of structure, since they offer the framework within which young people make their decisions. This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to juvenile use of social media sites. It is important to note that the popularity and usage patterns of various platforms may change over time, reflecting changes in both individual agency and platform structures.

**Categorization of favorite social media tool among youth**

Social networks have altered marketing, and our newest worldwide social media statistics study summary for 2022 reveals that their popularity is still expanding. Networks' popularity varies by demography, and they are continually changing. According to research cited in this article by Global WebIndex, 59% of the world's population utilizes social media. The daily use average is 2 hours and 29 minutes. YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat are the most popular internet platforms among teenagers, and Indian kids are becoming increasingly reliant on them (Chaffey, 2022).

**Figure 4:** Favorite social media tools categorized by youth



**Source:** Field Survey, 2022

The figure 4 below shows the clear picture about categorization of favorite social media tool among youth. The information in the previous sentence reveals which social media sites are most popular among the young people who participated in the study's poll. According to the research, a sizable portion of these young individuals have a preferred social media site, with Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram being the most often used choices. In particular, 20% of respondents named Facebook as their preferred social media platform, 36.11% named Youtube as their preferred platform, and 18.33% named Instagram as their preferred platform.

According to the study, a sizable percentage of young people have a favourite social media site, with Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram being the most popular options. Individual agency may be observed in these platform choices, as young people have the ability to pick which platforms they like and how they use them. Simultaneously, the availability and popularity of these platforms may be considered as instances of structure, since they offer the framework within which young people make their decisions.

This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to youth use of social media. It is important to note that the popularity and usage patterns of various platforms may change over time, reflecting changes in both individual agency and platform structures. It is also crucial to realize that the data represents just the perspectives of the young people

who took part in the poll and may not correctly reflect the preferences of the total community of young people who use social media.

### Activities performed by youth on different social media sites

Among pre-teens and adolescents, social media is an important component of their social and creative lives. Youngsters and teenagers use social media to have fun, find and keep friends, share and learn about hobbies, explore identities, and create connections with family. It's a continuation of their offline and in-person conversations. In fact, girls between the ages of 16 and 24 spend the most overall time on social media (an average of 3 hours and 13 minutes a day) (Social media benefits and risks: pre-teens and teenagers, 2022).

**Table 1:** *Activities done by youth on social media*

Activities Done by Youth in Social Media Sites	Number (n-109)	Percent (%)
Post Pictures	47	43.12
Comments on others posts	35	32.11
Read others posts	95	87.16
Post videos	16	14.68
Post stories	37	33.94
Sees other post and stories	91	83.49
React on others post with emoji	35	32.11

### Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table 1 below indicates different sorts of activities done by youth on social media. According to the research, it appears that most of the young people polled use social media to read and observe the postings and tales of others rather than actively producing their own content. 43.12% of the teenagers polled admitted to posting images to social networking sites, while 32.1% stated they left comments and used emojis to reply to others' posts. 87.16% of young people claimed to view other people's messages, while 14.68% claimed to submit videos. 83.49% of respondents reported seeing other people's posts and stories, while 33.94% reported posting their own. It's important to note that these percentages might not sum up to 100% because the youngsters polled might have engaged in a variety of social media activities.

Individual agency may be evident in these social media decisions, as young people have the flexibility to pick which activities they participate in and how they utilize social media. At the same time, the availability and norms of these activities may be viewed as examples of structure since they offer the environment in which young people make their decisions. This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to youth use of social media. It is important to note that the popularity and usage patterns of certain activities may change over time, reflecting changes in both individual agency and platform structures.

### Technologies device used by youth to access social media

Globally, youth have a wide range of gadgets, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, and smart TVs, to access social media. Depending on variables

including pricing, internet infrastructure, and individual preferences, several devices may be utilized. Smartphones may be the most common device in some areas because of their inexpensive price and ability to access the internet over a cellular network..

**Table 2**

*Devices used by youth to access social media*

Device Used to Access Social Media	Number (n-109)	Percent (%)
Smart Phones	104	95.41
Laptop	47	43.12
Desktop	7	6.42
Tablet	5	4.59

Source: Field Survey, 2022

According to the information in Table 2, most young respondents (95.41%) use cellphones to access social media sites. Less people (43.12%) use laptops, compared to 6.42% who use desktops and 4.59% who use tablets. It is important to note that these percentages could not sum up to 100% because the young respondents may have accessed social media through a variety of devices.

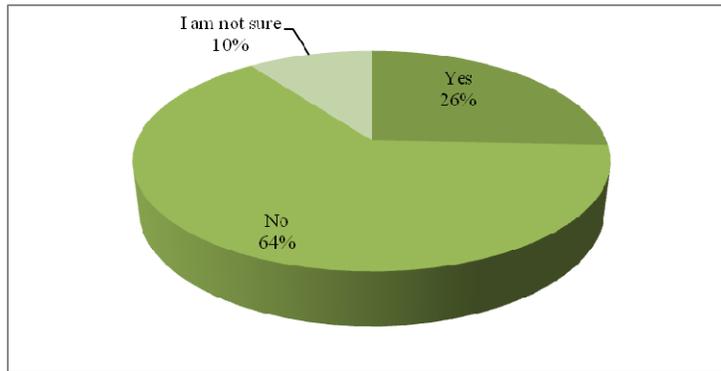
The research findings in the context of youth and social media reveal that young people utilize a range of devices to access various social media sites on a daily basis. Individual agency may be evident in these device choices, as young people have the ability to pick which gadgets they use and how they use them to access social media. Simultaneously, the availability and usefulness of various gadgets for accessing various platforms may be considered as examples of structure, since they create the framework within which young people make their decisions.

This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to youth use of social media. It is important to note that the popularity and usage patterns of certain devices may alter over time, reflecting changes in both individual agency and platform structures. It would be fascinating to investigate further the elements that impact young people's decisions to utilize specific devices to access specific social media sites, as well as how and why these decisions are made.

### **Youth responses regarding the parents monitor on use of social media**

Personal monitoring is the most notable of these procedures used by parents to watch their child's behavior and interactions in digital places. 61% of parents have examined which websites their adolescent has visited, and 60% have reviewed their teen's social media profile. Teens are increasingly embracing mobile devices to connect, share, and browse online, and over half (48%) of parents have looked through their child's phone call records or texts (Anderson, 2016).

**Figure 5:** *Status of parental monitor on use of social media*



**Source: Field Survey, 2022**

According to the pie chart, 64% of the young respondents have parents that do not check on their usage of social media. This indicates that these parents don't monitor or keep tabs on their kids' social media usage. Less than two-thirds of young people who responded (26%) stated that their parents do keep an eye on how they use social media, and 10% weren't sure.

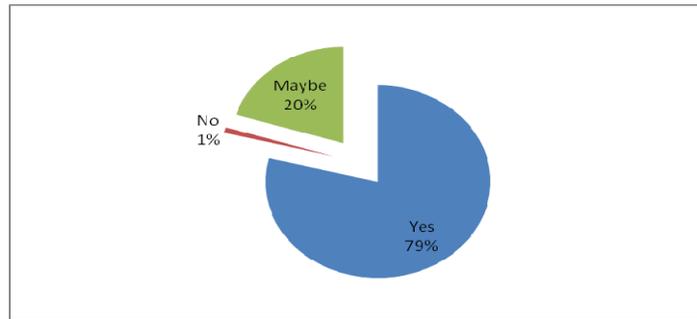
The research findings in the context of youth and social media reveal that many of the young people who replied to the survey have parents who do not monitor their social media usage. This lack of parental monitoring is an example of structure since it shows the societal conventions and standards that govern parent-child relationships as well as the expectations for parental engagement in children's internet activities. At the same time, young people's social media choices and actions may be considered as examples of agency, since they have the option to use social media in ways that may or may not correspond with their parents' expectations or requests for supervision.

This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to youth use of social media. It is important to note that the factors influencing parental oversight of children's social media use can vary. These can include a lack of awareness or interest in social media, a belief in children's maturity to use social media responsibly, or a lack of time or resources to monitor online activities.

**Perception of youth on usefulness of social media**

A variety of personal, social, and educational variables are likely to have an impact on how young people throughout the world see the value of social media. Some young people may have had positive social media experiences and see it as a helpful tool for getting in touch with friends and family, exchanging ideas, and keeping up with current affairs. Some people could have had bad experiences and think social media isn't as effective. Youth who have learned about social media safety and responsible use may be more inclined to see it as a valuable tool (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

**Figure 6:** *Youths thought towards social media is useful*



**Source: Field Survey, 2022**

The pie-chart below shows clear picture about the perception of youth on usefulness of social media sites. According to the pie chart, most young respondents (79%) think utilizing social networking sites is beneficial. This indicates that these young people value utilizing social media sites to remain in touch with friends and family, share knowledge and opinions, and stay current on news events. 20% of young people who responded stated it would be helpful to use social media, while 1% said it is not useful.

This suggests that these young people appreciate the ability to use social media to stay in contact with friends and family, exchange information and ideas, and keep up with current events. This favorable attitude toward social media use is an example of how individual agency is impacted by the social structures of the accessible social media platforms, as well as the norms and standards that govern their use. At the same time, the decisions and actions of young people on social media may define the platforms' architecture and impact how others use them. This interaction between agency and structure is what eventually leads to juvenile use of social media sites.

**Conclusion:**

This current research aimed to focuses on use of social media among youth. From a sociological standpoint, this paper analyzes youth interest on social media site as *agency* and different social media site as *structure* which *Interplay on agency and structure* creates use of social media sites on certain time and space by youth. The research findings show use of different social media by youth where majority of them use Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Tiktok and few of them use pinterest, snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn and GooglrPlus. The youth uses different social media site for different purpose like to comment and post photos and videos, to react and see others photos and videos, post stories e.t.c.

Social media is a collection of technology and online venues that may help individuals and businesses satisfy their information and communication needs. Youth use social media to remain in touch with their pals. Youths have always chatted after school, long before social media - at the bus stop, in the park, on the phone - they simply have a different platform to do it today.

According to Giddens' structuration theory, there is a social framework (traditions, institutions, and moral norms) that guides human behavior. However, human activity may

modify these structures, for example, by replicating them alternatively, perceiving them separately, or eliminating them.

From the standpoint of Social Media Sites, it appears that structuration provides a variety of different notions and views that are intriguing to field researchers. This appears to be the case, despite a number of key elements of the theory that may be problematic in a social media setting, as well as Giddens' own lack of attention to, or apparent interest in, technology in general, and social media in particular.

It can be shown that social media site scholars have applied structuration theory in a number of ways. As a result, social theories are not always limited to a single issue. Indeed, it has been argued that social media researchers should seek to investigate the full range of theories borrowed from other disciplines rather than limiting themselves to a few concepts that appear to be most directly applicable to their work.

This analysis has suggested that social media site researchers' application of structuration theory has only addressed a tiny portion of its potential, and that major more discoveries would be attainable through diligent, but critical, exploration of Giddens' concepts. To the degree that such selective usage is also evident in how other borrowed ideas have been deployed by social media researchers.

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