Social Networking Sites and Their Impact on Life Satisfaction: A Case Study of Kathmandu

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Abstract

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has revolutionized the digital world by connecting people around the globe through internet technology. Ever since its introduction, SNSs are growing rapidly and have become the integral part of day to day lives. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat etc. are some of the ubiquitous SNSs platforms. This paper uncovers the impacts of these SNSs platform on life satisfaction of people inside Kathmandu valley.

This research highlights on two theories "Socio-emotional Selectivity Theory" (SST) and "Uses and Gratification Theory" (UGT) which highly impacts the SNSs usage patterns. The survey was conducted by distributing online questionnaires. The results were derived through SPSS tool using descriptive and inferential analysis methods. The findings suggest that Facebook is popular among all age groups while LinkedIn is popular within age range 25-40. Similarly, socialization, entertainment, communication and career building are the motivations behind SNSs usage. Also, the results show, though SNSs is very useful in free knowledge sharing, the lack of proper government rules and regulation seems to be a greater barrier in their effective implementation. Finally, the results unveil that life satisfaction increases when there is increase in actual friends and increase in well-being of people after using SNSs. The paper further proposed a conceptual model for effective SNSs implementation in Nepal.

Keywords— Conceptual Model, Facebook, LinkedIn, Life satisfaction, social networking sites, social-emotional selectivity theory, uses and gratification theory

1 INTRODUCTION

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are evolving online media platforms which connects people around the Globe and unifies them into one irrespective of geographical, cultural and lingual differences. Today, SNSs is densely used for communication, collaboration, entertainment, information/media sharing and a lot more and hence play a substantial role in people's daily lives. Some of the popular ubiquitous SNSs are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat etc. SNSs are also known as "social networking services or social media".

This significance of SNSs in human daily lives provides the stage for studying the relationship of SNSs with well-being and life satisfaction. There are various studies made over the years about SNSs and life satisfaction all over the world and these studies are mainly Facebook centric. There is lack of proper study done in context of Nepal and the impact in Nepalese citizen is still vague and unknown. Hence, the study of relationship between SNSs and life satisfaction in context of Nepal is significant and indispensable.

Two theories plays a prominent role in SNSs usage and provide strong framework behind the increased usage of SNSs by people.

Socio-emotional Selectivity Theory (SST)

SST supports the fact that at older age people tends to live at present and their emotional satisfaction is achieved by interactions through social networks (Sinclair & Grieve, 2017). At old age people keeps their network size smaller intentionally focusing only on real and strong friendship, which is again based on SST (Yu, et al., 2018).

• Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

According to this theory, people motivations of using SNSs are derived by various factors like socializing, seeking information, learning and getting entertainment (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016). Over the years, it is seen that there is tremendous increase in affection towards SNSs. Among 4.54 billion internet users out of 7.75 billion world populations, approximately 3.8 billion are active social media users (Kemp, 2020). This data proves the increasing interest of human towards SNSs. This

attachment is not only seen in developed countries but in developing countries like Nepal also, SNSs usage is at paramount state. There are about 10 million active social media and 10.21 million internet users out of 28.87 million total populations in Nepal (Kemp, 2020). Another study showed that Nepal is second leading country among south Asian countries in social media penetration and SNSs are the main driver for increase in internet penetration (Technology, 2018). These data lead towards fact that SNSs has become the essential part of human day-to-day lives and hence, their impact cannot be ignored.

This significance of SNSs in human daily lives provides the stage for studying the relationship of SNSs with well-being and life satisfaction. There are various studies made over the years about SNSs and life satisfaction all over the world and these studies are mainly Facebook centric. There is lack of proper study done in context of Nepal and the impact in Nepalese citizen is still vague and unknown. Hence, the study of relationship between SNSs and life satisfaction in context of Nepal is significant and indispensable.

1.1Problem Statement

The study helps us to determine if there is any relationship between SNSs usage and life satisfaction. Since, SNSs have taken time in people's everyday life; their impact is both positive and negative. The studies show various aspects of SNSs in people's lives:

- i. Along with enhanced life satisfaction, social burden and social overload are also brought by SNSs usage (Zhan, et al., 2016).
- ii. Excessive Facebook usage negatively affects well-being (Satici & Uysal, 2015). Facebook addiction is negatively related with self-esteem and life satisfaction (Błachnio, et al., 2016).
- iii. Quitting Facebook for a while positively impact well-being; i.e., there will be increase in positive emotions and ultimately life satisfaction (Tromholt, 2016).
- iv. The impact of SNSs in life satisfaction is not constant and is directed by social events which trigger both positive and negative emotions (Wilczek, 2018).

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are considered for conducting this study:

- RQ1. What are the demographic usage patterns of SNS in the context of Nepal?
- RQ2. What are the motivational factors behind the SNSs usage?
- RQ3. What are the technological barriers and opportunities in the effective usage of SNSs?
- RQ4. Is there any significant relationship between SNSs usage and mental well-being and life satisfaction?

1.3 Aims

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in human lives by examining its impact on life satisfaction and well-being.

1.4 Objectives

In general, the main objective of this study is to examine the usage patterns, motivational factors, and technological barriers & opportunities of SNS and their impacts on life satisfaction in the Nepal Context. The specific objectives of this study are listed below:

- i. To determine the demographic usage patterns of SNS in the context of Nepal.
- ii. To identify the motivational factors behind the increasing SNS usage
- iii. To identify the technological barriers and opportunities in the effective usage
- iv. To understand the relationship between SNS usage and mental well-being and life satisfaction.

1.5 Scope and significance of research

The scope of this study is the consideration of major SNSs like Facebook and LinkedIn from pool of available SNSs. This research was conducted inside Kathmandu valley and included participants of various age groups. The forms were distributed to 500 people randomly. The demographic groups were formed based on the age. Age groups in this study were categorized as (Indexmundi, 2019). This study can be remarkable contribution to uncover the impact of SNSs in everyday lives of

Nepalese citizens. Below are the some of the areas that will be benefitted by this research paper:

- i. It will help to distinguish between positive as well as negative aspect of SNSs and help people to make better decisions while spending their time in social media.
- ii. Government can get insight of the impacts of SNSs in citizens' lives which help in building relevant Information Technology (IT) policies to make them productive.
- iii. Medical science can be benefitted with this paper while analyzing people's well-being.

1.6Limitations of the study

There are few limitations of this research, which are listed below:

- i. The survey was conducted inside Kathmandu valley to generalize the SNSs impact in case of Nepal.
- ii. The survey sample was limited.
- iii. Only two social media platforms were considered among a pool of SNSs.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The internet and social media penetration is increasing day by day around the world. At present state the world population is 7.75 billion, out of which, internet users are 4.54 billion and active social media users are 3.80 billion whereas in case of Nepal where total population is 28.87 million, there are 10.21 million internet users and 10 million active social media users (Kemp, 2020). It can be said that not only around the world but also in Nepal, SNSs users are increasing heavily.

As per Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA), 2.25 million new internet users were introduced in 2017 and SNSs are the crucial driver behind this adoption (Technology, 2018). This led to the fact that the study of impact of SNSs in human lives has become indispensable.

Features/Tools in Balancing Technology Addiction

Though positive perception is found towards SNSs among students, the study has showed that the academic performance is highly degraded by excessive usage of such sites (Upadhyay & Sedain, 2019). The excessive use of Facebook can impact mental well-being adversely, and hence this can be controlled by making "social media literacy", a compulsory course among students (Satici & Uysal, 2015). Controlling oneself while using Facebook can positively influence well-being, i.e., through positive emotions and increased life satisfaction (Tromholt, 2016).

New additions have been done by social networking giants like Facebook in their application tools, to help people regulate the amount of time spent and make it more "intentional, positive and inspiring" (Nieva, 2018).

Acts concerning SNSs Implementations

The regulatory guidelines to police social media platforms are gradually taken into consideration by countries around the world, and Germany's NetzDG law, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by EU, Sharing of Abhorrent Violent Material Act of Australia etc. are examples of this (bbc, 2020). Prior to that, SNSs like Facebook largely relied on self-governance policies to regulate contents and behaviors of its users for effective implementation (bbc, 2020).

In context of Nepal, "National Information and Communication Technology Policy" was introduced in 2015 while after huge acceptance of Internet and social media platforms all over Nepal various Acts like Privacy Act in 2018 and IT Bill in 2019 were formed which prescribes for social media platforms as well (Singh, 2020).

Barriers and Opportunities

Effective SNSs usage inside an organization depends on various factors like size and complexity of organization and digital divides existent between people (Eimhjellen , et al., 2014). The other barriers in implementing SNSs as a learning tool are lack of knowledge, time and priority as most institutions are not capable of monitoring them with their available resources of staffs (Natarajan, 2017).

The technological opportunities offered by SNSs are immense. SNSs has motivates information sharing within groups and enhance learning environment for student through group discussion (Thapa, 2017). Social Networking sites are highly influential when it comes to knowledge sharing and learning and covers three basic aspects of learning (Natarajan, 2017):

- Serves as a bridge between outside world and classroom space
- Provides collaboration among learners
- Facilitates peer to peer learning through discussions and interactions
- Promotes free knowledge sharing
- Resources are easily available with mere connection of Internet

Though, SNSs delivers massive benefits in learning, the technological barriers lies in their effective implementation cannot be ignored. Budget and structure of any organization are barriers in implementing SNSs (Eimhjellen , et al., 2014).

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3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

With the increased usage of SNSs over the years, there is also increased rate in negative impacts of SNSs along with positive one in human lives. Social burden and social overload (Zhan, et al., 2016), lower self-esteem and lower life satisfaction (Błachnio, et al., 2016) are few of the negative impacts of SNSs usage.

SNSs impact in case of Nepal is still in vague state as there are only few studies made over the years focusing on Nepalese citizens and those studies lack the aspect of technical view. The research was conducted to understand the relationship of SNSs usage with age and mental well-being. Further, it was used for identification of motivational factors behind SNSs usage and benefitted user groups from SNSs usage.

3.2 Research Method

The research method that was followed for determining the results in this research was a combination of both qualitative as well as quantitative approach. This research followed both descriptive as well as exploratory research methods.

Descriptive Research

This was done with the help of pre-coded and Likert-type questions included inside online survey questionnaires. This method helped to extract major results and help in generalizing to larger population.

Exploratory Research

This was achieved with the help of open-ended questions included inside online survey questionnaires. This helped to extract new information from respondents which led to new findings inside the research.

3.3 Research Approach

In this study, mixed approach is used i.e., integration of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. A better and deeper insight can be gained with the help of combining and analyzing statistical data. Using mixed approach, we can gain holistic approach to a problem or study and more insight to a problem. Mixed type of research methods has been accepted in the research designs recently besides choosing purely qualitative or purely quantitative methods in a research. The integration of both these methods as a mixed method helps a researcher in various research disciplines to answer research questions with a rigorous approach. (Aramo-Immonen, 2013)

3.4 Data collection method and tools for data collection

The data collection method was online surveys because of the current Covid-19 Pandemic situation. The questionnaires were distributed to 500 people who were using SNSs in their daily lives.

3.5 Sample Selection

Simple random sampling technique was used for collecting the data. In random sampling, the sample is chosen randomly which is the unbiased representation of whole population (economictimes, 2021).

The effort was done to uniformly distributed questionnaires maintaining the gender as well as age group. This helped to interpret the finding in more general and practical ways.

3.6 Analysis Plan

Data analysis was done through both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Various tools and theories were used for data analysis. They are discussed below:

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3.8.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Below two methods were used for quantifying the results obtained from online survey questionnaire. Statistics is a discipline which deals with the science of data collection, analysis and interpretation through two different modes: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Mishra, et al., 2019).

i. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are summary measures usually used to summarize the observations seen in data and can be categorized into three different measurement types (Mishra, et al., 2019):

- Measurement of frequency: Frequency and percent are measured here.
- Measurement of central tendency: Mean, median and mode are included here.
- Measurement of dispersion/variation: Variance, SD, standard error, quartile, interquartile range, percentile, range, and Coefficient of Variation (CV) falls under this.

ii. Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics is used for deriving conclusions and generalizing the findings for total population by studying sample data based on assumptions (Mishra, et al., 2019).

- Chi-Square Statistics: In order to determine significance of relationship between various variables chi-square statistics is quite useful. In this study this test was used to find the significance level of association between various variables.
- Multiple Regression: Linear regression was used to derive relationship between various variables. In linear regression, we can take greater than equal to one independent variable along with one dependent variable.
- Multiple Responses Analysis: Multiple responses analysis was used for those cases where
 respondents gave one or more than one choice for single questions. It was helpful in
 determining the significant independent variable which impact highly on dependent
 variable.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Below two theories were used for qualitative analysis of SNSs usage.

i. Socio-Emotional Selectivity theory (SST)

Socio-emotional Selectivity theory (SST) was considered for deriving relationship between SNSs usage and age.

ii. Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) was used to identify factors for SNSs usage among various age groups.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

4.1 Application of Multiple Regression Method for Determining Relationship between SNSs usage and Life Satisfaction

Table 1 Correlation between Motivation Factors and SNSs Usage

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The correlation table shows with one-tailed significance type for actual friends, social burden, mental health and well-being having significance values of 0.000 and emotional connection with significance of 0.006. Correlation coefficients of factors affecting life satisfaction: actual friends, emotional connection, social burden, mental health and well-being are 0.287, 0.140, -0.240, -0.374 and 0.575 respectively and there are no missing observations for all variables.

Coefficients^a Standardized Unstandardized Coefficients 95.0% Confidence Interval for B Coefficients Std. Error Upper Bound Beta Lower Bound Model В Sig. 2.507 (Constant) .397 6.308 <.001 1.725 3.289 Educational_Information -.024 .068 -.021 -.349 .727 -.156 109 Communication .112 .069 .096 1.632 104 -.023 247 .063 2.685 .008 295 Socialization .170 .164 .046 Entertainment .054 .065 .048 832 406 -.074 182 .069 .064 .067 1.082 280 -.057 196 Career Building a. Dependent Variable: SNSs. Use

Table 2 Coefficient Table for Factors Affecting SNSs Use

The coefficient table actual friends and well-being with positive coefficients of 0.172 and 0.498 whereas emotional connection, social burden and mental health are having negative coefficient value of -0.071, -0.076 and -0.165. The significance of motivational factors for SNSs use: actual friends, emotional connection, social burden, mental health and well-being are having p-values 0.004, 0.198, 0.162, 0.001 and <0.001 respectively.

The results highlight on numerous findings. Facebook is popular among all age groups while LinkedIn is more popular among younger professional of age groups 25 to 40. The results also suggest that females are more regular users of SNSs as compare to male ones. Similarly, married people are using SNSs extensively than single people. Almost 38% people spent 1-2 hours on SNSs daily. The results also displays that there is significant relationship between SNSs usage, well-being and life satisfaction. Among various motivations factor socialization, communication, entertainment and career building were significantly related to SNSs use while delivering educational information through SNSs use was not that significant in case of Kathmandu users. Though people think free knowledge sharing is the benefit one can gain through SNSs, lack of proper governmental rules and regulations serves as barriers for its effective implementation. Although people of Kathmandu also believes that SNSs usage increase well-being through their actual connections in SNSs groups,

however the findings also suggest that the addiction towards SNSs usage can decrease life satisfaction in the long run.

5 Discussion

Data Collection was done from 5th February 2021 to 17th February 2021 through google forms. A total of 500 questionnaires links were distributed to random people through various mediums like emails, chat applications and even through SNSs. In accumulation, 315 total responses were obtained.

The current population of Kathmandu in the year 2021 is approximately 1,472,000 (macrotrends, 2021). Hence, with confidence level of 95% and margin error of 5%, the sample size for survey needs to be 385. However, since we have received responses from only 315 respondents, the margin of error will slightly increase to 5.53%. Hence, there will be margin between 5 and 6. There are several findings that were obtained through data analysis and are described in below sections.

The results and findings suggest that demographic factors like age, gender, marital status, profession are having huge impact on SNSs usage.

Comparison Between Younger and Older Adults in Alignment with SST Theory

The descriptive statistics shows that the median value for people believing that older adults are less in SNSs platforms is 4. More than 50% people agreed to this. Also, the median value is 4 in questions which asked people if older adults are benefitted less as compared to younger ones, which means respondents agreed on this as well. These findings totally align with the SST theory which advocates that older adults are comparatively less in SNSs as they are driven by short term goals in life as compared to younger ones.

This finding is similar to the finding of author Pamara F. Chang and team (Chang, et al., 2015) and they further advocate that this SST perspective provides motivations for SNSs usage i.e., UGT theory. Findings on Motivational Factors behind Increased SNSs usage

Multiple regression was used to determine the motivational factors behind the SNSs usage. Socialization, communication, entertainment, career building and educational information were taken as independent variables and SNSs use as dependent variable.

P-value of <0.005 was found in ANOVA table which indicates that these factors significantly drive SNSs use and multiple regression is good fit for data analysis. Two of the factors: socialization and communication are the most significant factors as they hold p-value < 0.005 and are frequent drivers for increased SNSs use count over the years in Kathmandu valley followed by entertainment and career building with significance of <0.05 and <0.01 respectively. However, seeking educational information for SNSs use is having significance value of 0.215 and is not significant concerning SNSs use

Correlation coefficients also shows all of these variables are quite statistically significant variables for SNSs usage for people inside Kathmandu valley except for educational factor and among them socialization is the most significant factors with highest coefficient value. This is similar to the findings of Gogan and team (Gogan, et al., 2018), where socialization, entertainment are the drivers of SNSs usage. Educational purpose i.e., gaining information and knowledge by using SNSs is not supported by the statistics.

Contradictions with Previous Studies

However, the outcomes of this study is dissimilar to the findings of the study done by Richard Basilisco and Kyung Jin Cha (Basilisco & Cha, 2015), where Facebook use was affected by information seeking with p-value of 0.01. However, this contradiction can be due to the fact that the study was carried out in Philippines and cannot be relevant for Nepal.

Alignment with UGT Theory

The findings contribute on the support of UGT theory which advocates that SNSs usage are affected by various factors like information, entertainment (Kim, et al., 2019) since people are mindful of needs and goals in their lives and choose SNSs platforms likewise (Ifinedo, 2016).

5.3 Findings on Technological Barriers and Opportunities in Effective Usage of SNSs

42.2% of people finds that instead of investing their time in SNSs it would have been beneficial if

they have done some productive which indicates that people feel unproductive after using SNSs, which also can affect well-being and life satisfaction directly. More than 50% people finds that because of lack of governmental rules and regulations SNSs are not able to enrich lives of people through learning and communication.

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Lack of awareness was found to be the most dominant factor which serves as a technological barrier in effective usage of SNSs. Free knowledge sharing accounts for the highest frequency distribution for technological opportunities behind SNSs usage which is similar to the findings of author Sakhila Thapa (Thapa, 2017), where she derived the results that SNSs can be used as effective learning tool for group discussion that helps in enhancing learning environment.

Findings on Relationship between SNS Usage, Mental Well-Being and Life Satisfaction

Multiple regression was again used to determine the relationship between SNSs usage and life satisfaction. Actual friends, emotional connection, social burden, mental health and well-being were taken as independent variables as these are the reason behind usage of SNSs by most of the people and are quite important in determine life satisfaction in relation to them and here, life satisfaction is taken as dependent variable.

P-value of <0.005 was found in ANOVA table which indicates that these variables are statistically significant to drive life satisfaction and multiple regression is good fit for data analysis. All of the variables of SNSs usage: actual friends, emotional connection, social burden, mental health and wellbeing are the most significant variables as they hold p-value < 0.005 and are helpful in deriving association with life satisfaction.

Correlation coefficients also shows all of these variables are quite statistically significant variables for SNSs usage for people inside Kathmandu valley except for emotional connection and social burden. Variables like actual friends, mental health and well-being are having significant relationship with life satisfaction as they hold p-value less than 0.005. Actual friends and well-being are positively related to life satisfaction whereas mental-health is negatively related to life satisfaction.

This means every life satisfaction increases when there is increase in actual friends through SNSs and whenever there is increase in well-being of people after using SNSs. Similarly, negative coefficients signify that whenever there is increase in social media addiction or overuse of SNSs, there will be decrement in life satisfaction.

This is similar to the findings of Agata Błachnio and team (Błachnio, et al., 2016), where SNSs addiction is negatively related to life satisfaction. The results of this survey also align with the study done by Jian Raymond Rui and team (Rui, et al., 2019) which advocates making strong connections positively affect well-being and life satisfaction of SNSs users, and strong connection comes with actual friends.

6 Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

Social Networking Sites are the buzzword ever since its evolution which allows to join people around the world through online platforms. SNSs not only connect but build social networks and social relationships. Today, the uses of SNSs are not limited to establishing connections only but are used for wide interests. From communication to collaboration, from entertainment to information sharing SNSs holds special place in people lives. Online Platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram etc. are nowadays not only used by people but also extensively used by various organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, service industries and other areas for reaching wide audience around the world in less than a second.

The wide acceptance of SNSs has brought multiple impacts in human lives and the impact is positive as well as negative because of which the study of the impact of SNSs on people's have gathered interests from around the world. Various researches were conducted to uncover the real impact of SNSs. But in case of Nepal, the study conducted earlier were limited to some community which was not able to provide true impact of SNSs in the lives of Nepalese people. This study was conducted to fill in that gap. It was assumed that the study carried out inside Kathmandu valley and the derived results can be generalized to the population of Nepal as Kathmandu is the capital city of Nepal and

people from every corners of Nepal reside here and that would make generalization more aesthetic.

6.2 Recommendation

Below are the few recommendations for this research area:

- This research paper has opened possibilities for conducting future research by increasing research sample area as well as sample size.
- In future studies, the consideration of other life satisfaction characteristics like current income ratio of individual, network size of friend's circle, relationship status with friends and families etc. can provide broader aspect to research area.
- It is also recommended to use Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) along with other statistics tools to determine to determine exact association of SNSs usage to well-being and life satisfaction.
- The research paper can be further extended with medical point of view like how one's metal health can deteriorate eventually with uncontrolled usage of SNSs.
- The research data was cross-sectional as it was collected at one point of time. In future studies, the consideration of longitudinal data can be done, which is the collection of same data repeatedly from same sample for extended period of time. Such data will be beneficial to analyze the changes in behaviors and thinking of people over time.
- The research paper provides as a base for developing recommendation system in context of Nepal to empower younger as well as older generations through SNSs.
- The proposed conceptual model can be further modified and can be made more realistic for effective implementation of SNSs all around Nepal.

6.3 Future work

This research was more focused for SNSs users inside Kathmandu valley. Future research can be conducted by increasing research areas like in rural Nepal and few more cities, so that findings can be broader and more accurate. The proposed conceptual model can further be developed based on detailed findings after increasing the domain.

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