

An Analysis of the Usage of Social Networking Sites by Prospective Teachers during Pandemic Period

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ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNSs) are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a profile and share connections with a certain list of other users. Their phenomenal features like information and communication, entertainment and immediate interaction with each other popularized them worldwide. The recent perilous COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new normal to the forefront in all spheres of life in general and education in specific. This pandemic raised the demand for online education modes. The existing SNSs successfully fulfilled that immediate demand. To carry out the online teaching-learning process without disruption, the Education sector had to adopt these SNSs immediately. This usage of the SNSs popularised them among the students and they started using them for other than educational purposes. In the present study, researchers analyzed prospective teachers' usage of social networking sites during the pandemic period. The analysis of the basic usage pattern of SNSs in the present study reveals that the prospective teachers at large started using them on daily basis and even multiple times a day during the pandemic. While analyzing the affective experience of using SNSs, the prospective teachers' researchers found that most users were satisfied with these social media sites.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites (SNSs), Prospective Teachers, Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

All of us are so busy in our life that we do not have time to spend with our friends and peer groups. Factors like long distance, security, family and livelihood responsibilities, and social and economic issues act as hindrances in regular interaction with each other. Due to such factors digital 'Social Media' networking has become a part and parcel of our lives.

Social networking sites (SNSs) are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a profile and share connections with a certain list of other users. In SNSs, people can establish their own social networks, design their own homepages, and post personal news, photos, audio, videos and so on (Shi, Luo, Yang, Liu, and Cai 2016). Some typical and worldwide popular SNSs are MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld (in Korea), Weibo and Renren (in China).

Some of the phenomenal features of SNSs are information and communication, entertainment and most importantly providing education for students. Above these, instant interaction with one another has made them popularized throughout the world. Web-based or digital Social Networking Sites (SNSs) possess great potential, leading to their rapid rise globally with an enormous user base. Younger generation users have played a significant role in popularizing them worldwide. Studies revealed that worldwide users around 3.5 billion who spend a standard time of 3 hours every day on varied social networking sites platforms have given a boom in the last decade (Samant et al., 2020). Khurana (2015) opines that the sites like Facebook, My Space, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype and Ning offer a platform to connect with new people, share experiences and gain exposure. According to Akram, Mahmud and Mahmood (2015) Facebook, MSN, Yahoo and Skype were majorly used by youngsters to stay connected with their family and acquaintances. Below two graphs are presenting the world's most used social platforms and incremental use of social networks by various generations.

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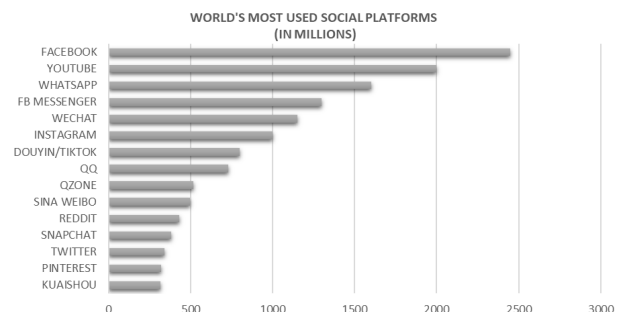
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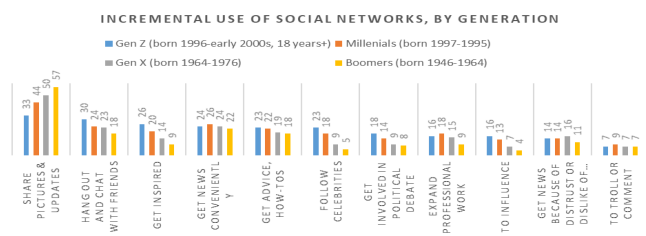
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COVID- 19 Pandemic and Usage of Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites(SNSs) turned out immensely used platforms during the pandemic COVID-19 situation. The online shift to carry on the teaching-learning process during the unprecedented times led to an increased usage of certain SNSs like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube due to their advantages for students and teachers



Graph 1, Source: DATAREPORTAL (2020)



Graph 2, Source: Marketing Chart (2019)

during the shutdown situation. Rabbi et al., (2020) through their study conducted during the COVID-19 situation revealed that social networking sites were an easy means to communicate with students owing to their advantage of accessibility. Teaching learning could be made possible with the help of these networking sites even in emergencies of the pandemic where face-to-face learning couldn't take place. Sobaih et al., (2020) found that social media as a tool was used effectively during the pandemic scenario by faculty to sustain formal teaching and learning while the students utilized them for getting engaged in the learning process, supporting one another and setting the online community. This showed that social media is an appropriate tool due to its ease of use, interactivity and usefulness features which facilitated "communication for formal academic usage". The related studies show the expanse of Social Networking Sites usage prominently in the education field and students being the users of different age groups who are affected in positive as well as negative ways.

The Objective of the study

Various studies done on the usage of SNSs disclosed that during the pandemic use of various social networking sites by students and teachers increased. Students' increased use of the SNSs in teaching-learning motivated the researchers to carry out their research on prospective teachers. So, the researchers focused on analysing prospective teachers' use of SNSs.

The objective of the present research was framed as "To analyse the usage of social networking sites by prospective teachers during the pandemic period."

Delimitation of the study

- For the present study, students pursuing their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program and were studying in their first or second year during the academic session 2020-21, were taken into consideration.
- The study was delimited to teacher education institutions of Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh only.
- 'YouTube' and 'Facebook' were the only Social Networking Sites (SNSs) taken into consideration for the study.

Research design and methodology

Students of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program studying in various teacher education institutions in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh were considered as the population of the present study. The descriptive survey method was used to collect the data. Purposely five teacher education institutions, that gave permission, were selected for the study. Prospective teachers i.e. B.Ed. 1st and 2nd year students of these institutions were taken as the cluster sample for the study. Table 1 is showing the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	16	9.64
Female	150	90.36
Year of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)		
First Year	46	27.71
Second Year	120	72.29
Preferably using Social Networking Sites		
Facebook	51	30.72
YouTube	115	69.28
Total	166	100

Tool Used

The tool developed by Shi, Luo, Yang, Liu and Cai (2014) titled "The Development and Validation of the SNSs Usage Questionnaire" was used to study the usage of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the sample. This tool includes two subscales, the SNSs Featured Usage Scale and the SNSs Affective Experience Scale. The scale included 13 items in order to measure featured usage on SNSs, like updating one's status and visiting friends' homepages. For 10 items, participants indicated the frequency of their usage of SNSs on a 7-point scale (1 = never, 7 = multiple times a day). For the other 3 items the respondents reported the duration of surfing SNSs each time (1 = less than 15 minutes, 7 = more than four hours), the number of their friends (1 = 1-50, 7 = over 500), and the constitution of their friends (1 = all are friends in real life, 7 = all are strangers in real life).

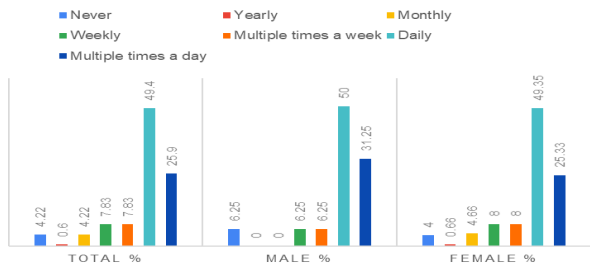
Analysis of the data and interpretation of the results

Objective 1: To analyse the usage of Social Networking Sites by prospective teachers.

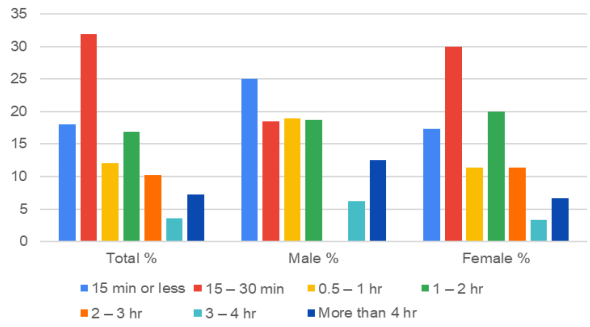
Under this objective responses of the prospective teachers on the following items were analysed and the result was interpreted.

Table 2: Frequency of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

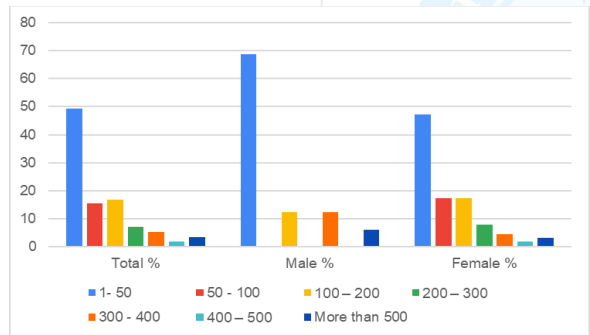
S.No.	Frequent Usage	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	4.22	6.25	4
2.	Yearly	0.60	0	0.66
3.	Monthly	4.22	0	4.66
4.	Weekly	7.83	6.25	8
5.	Multiple times a week	7.83	6.25	8
6.	Daily	49.4	50	49.35
7.	Multiple times a day	25.9	31.25	25.33
Total		100	100	100



Graph 3: Graphical Representation of the Table-2



Graph 4: Graphical Representation of the Table- 3



Graph 5: Graphical Representation of the Table- 4

The above table 2 shows that the majority of the male (50%) and female (49.35%) prospective teachers (B.Ed. students) were using SNSs daily. 31.25% of males and 25.33% of females used SNSs multiple times a day. Some of the male and female users who used SNSs on weekly basis were 6.25% and 8% respectively. A few of the female students used SNSs on a yearly and monthly basis. On average, male users' frequency (5.81) of using SNSs was more than female users (5.65).

About 31.93% of the students spent around 15 to 30 minutes each time they visited social networking sites whereas 18.07% spent 15 minutes or less on them (table 3). 16.87% of them spent 1-2 hours and 12.05% for 0.5-1 hour. A few students (3.61%) spend 3-4 hours on social networking sites each time they visited. The majority of the female students (30%) visited SNSs for 15 to 30 minutes whereas male students (25%) used SNSs for 15 min or less time. On average, the duration of the visit of SNSs in Male students was (3.19) more as compared to female students (3.15).

The table 4 depicts, on social networking sites, 49.4% of the students had 1-50 friends, 16.87% had 100-200 friends and 15.66% had 50-100 friends. In total, 81.93% had up to 200 friends, whereas only 18.07% had more than 200 friends among whom 3.61% had 500 plus friends.

Table 3: Average time spent on every visit to Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

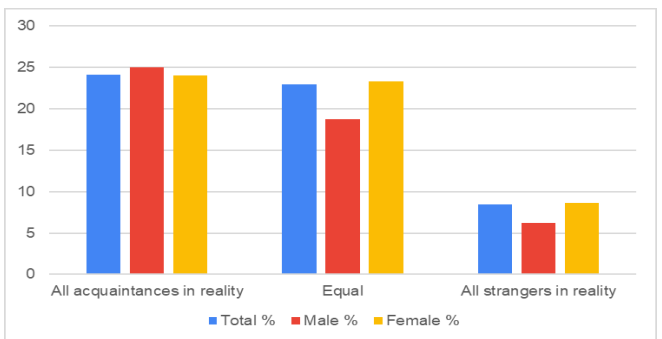
S.No.	Duration of visit	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	15 min or less	18.07	25	17.35
2.	15 – 30 min	31.93	18.5	30
3.	0.5 – 1 hr	12.05	19	11.33
4.	1 – 2 hr	16.87	18.75	20
5.	2 – 3 hr	10.24	0	11.33
6.	3 – 4 hr	3.61	6.25	3.33
7.	More than 4 hr	7.23	12.5	6.66
	Total	100	100	100

Table 4: Number of friends on Social Networking Sites

S.No.	Number of friends	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	1 - 50	49.4	68.75	47.35
2.	50 - 100	15.66	0	17.33
3.	100 – 200	16.87	12.5	17.33
4.	200 – 300	7.23	0	8
5.	300 - 400	5.42	12.5	4.66
6.	400 – 500	1.81	0	2
7.	More than 500	3.61	6.25	3.33
	Total	100	100	100

Table 5: Friends personally known on Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

S.No.	Friends known	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	All acquaintances in reality	24.09	25	24
2.	Equal	22.89	18.75	23.33
3.	All strangers in reality	8.43	6.25	8.67



Graph 6: Graphical Representation of the Table- 5



Table 6: Sending a private message

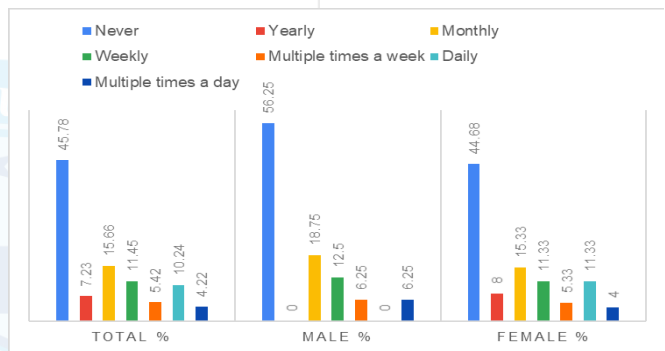
S.No.	Sending private message	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	45.78	56.25	44.68
2.	Yearly	7.23	0	8
3.	Monthly	15.66	18.75	15.33
4.	Weekly	11.45	12.5	11.33
5.	Multiple times a week	5.42	6.25	5.33
6.	Daily	10.24	0	11.33
7.	Multiple times a day	4.22	6.25	4
	Total	100	100	100

Table 8: Writing notes/blogs

S.No.	Writing notes/blogs	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	46.4	37.5	47.33
2.	Yearly	14.46	18.75	14
3.	Monthly	23.49	37.5	22
4.	Weekly	7.83	0	8.67
5.	Multiple times a week	3.61	0	4
6.	Daily	3.61	0	4
7.	Multiple times a day	0.60	6.25	0
	Total	100	100	100

Table 7: Updating status

S.No.	Updating status	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	11.45	25	10
2.	Yearly	19.28	25	18.67
3.	Monthly	34.93	25	41.33
4.	Weekly	17.47	12.5	12.67
5.	Multiple times a week	11.45	6.25	12
6.	Daily	4.82	6.25	4.67
7.	Multiple times a day	0.60	0	0.66
	Total	100	100	100



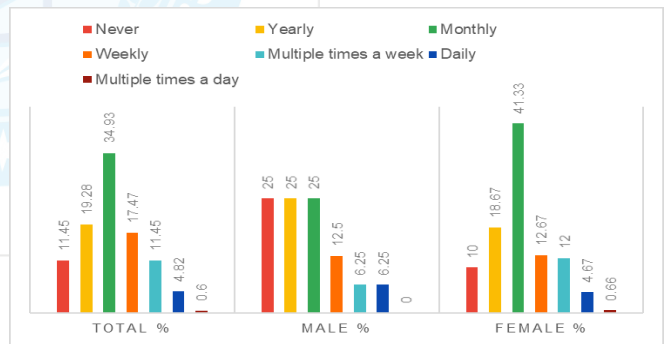
Graph 7: Graphical Representation of the Table- 6

Table 5 shows that a total of 24.09% of the students had friends on social networking sites who were personally known to them whereas 8.43% of the friends were not personally known to the students. They may be friends of friends or even strangers having some common interests. More male students (25%) accepted those people as friends who were personally known to them while female students (8.67%) were more who accepted strangers as their friends in SNSs as compared to males (6.25%).

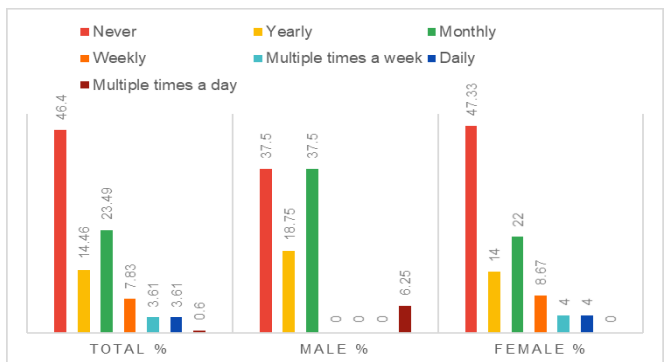
In totality (table 6), 45.78% of the students accepted that they never used SNSs to send private messages. This was accepted by more male students (56.25%) than females (44.68%). But the majority of the users i.e. 54.22% in total relied upon the SNSs to send their private messages.

Regarding updating the status (table 7), 34.93% of students of which female percentage (41.33%) were higher in updating their status in SNSs monthly. 19.28% of students were who yearly used to update their status, among such students' the male percentage (25%) was higher. 11.45% were such students who never updated their status while 4.82% and 0.6% of them did daily and multiple times a day respectively.

Table 8 shows that nearly half of the students i.e. 46.4% never used SNSs to write notes or blogs. Among them 47.33% of users were females and 37.5% were male users. But some other users used SNSs to write notes or blogs on a monthly (23.49%) and yearly (14.46%) basis.



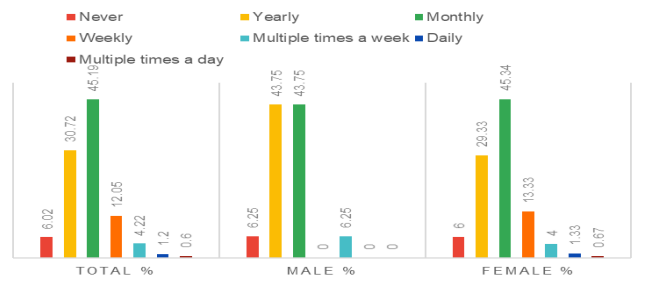
Graph 8: Graphical Representation of the Table 7



Graph 9: Graphical Representation of the Table- 8

Table 9: Updating profile image

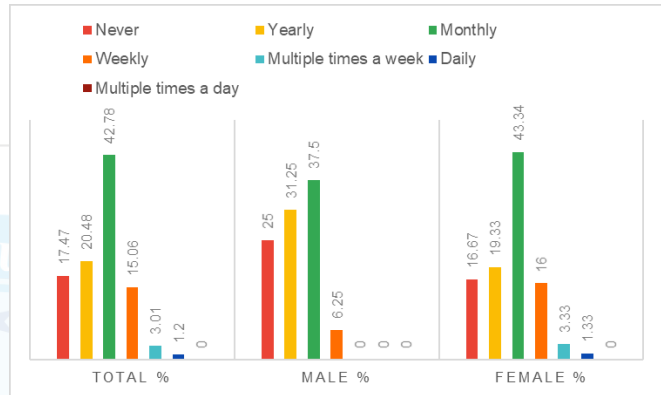
S.No.	Updating profile image	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	6.02	6.25	6
2.	Yearly	30.72	43.75	29.33
3.	Monthly	45.19	43.75	45.34
4.	Weekly	12.05	0	13.33
5.	Multiple times a week	4.22	6.25	4
6.	Daily	1.2	0	1.33
7.	Multiple times a day	0.6	0	0.67
	Total	100	100	100



Graph 10: Graphical Representation of the Table- 9

Table 10: Posting photos

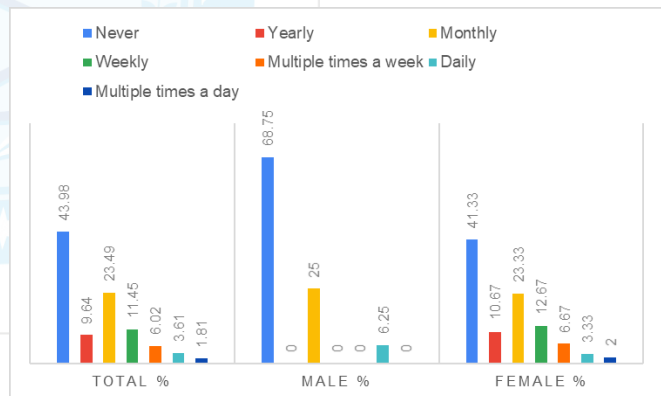
S.No.	Posting photos	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	17.47	25	16.67
2.	Yearly	20.48	31.25	19.33
3.	Monthly	42.78	37.5	43.34
4.	Weekly	15.06	6.25	16
5.	Multiple times a week	3.01	0	3.33
6.	Daily	1.2	0	1.33
7.	Multiple times a day	0	0	0
	Total	100	100	100



Graph 11: Graphical Representation of the Table- 10

Table 11: Sharing or re-sending others' profiles (e.g. notes or photos)

S.No.	Sharing or re-sending	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	43.98	68.75	41.33
2.	Yearly	9.64	0	10.67
3.	Monthly	23.49	25	23.33
4.	Weekly	11.45	0	12.67
5.	Multiple times a week	6.02	0	6.67
6.	Daily	3.61	6.25	3.33
7.	Multiple times a day	1.81	0	2
	Total	100	100	100



Graph 12: Graphical Representation of the Table- 11

Regarding updating the profile image table 9 shows that, 45.19% of students of whom were female percentage (45.34%) being higher updated their status in SNSs on monthly basis. 30.72% of students were such who updated their status yearly, among such students' the male percentage (43.75%) was higher. 6.02% were such students who never updated their status while 1.2% and 0.6% of them did daily and multiple times a day respectively.

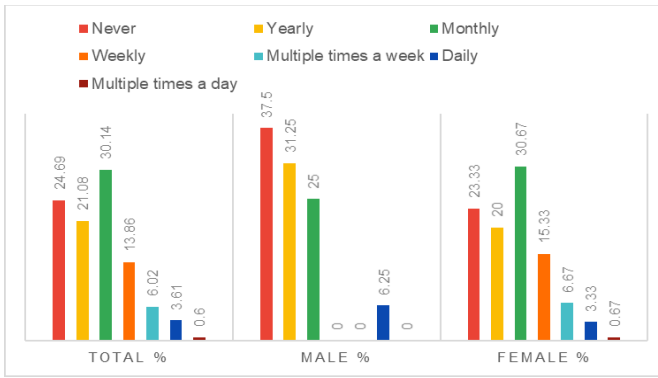
Table 10 shows that the majority of the SNSs users i.e. 42.78% posted photos on monthly basis. 20.48% of them posted photos yearly and 15.06% shared photos weekly. 17.47% of the students never posted photos while 3.01% and 1.2% shared photos multiple times a week and daily respectively. Overall, female users were more likely to post photos than male users.

The majority of the students i.e. 43.98% never used SNSs to share or re-send others' profiles (table 11). Among them 68.75% of users were males and 41.33% were female users. But some other

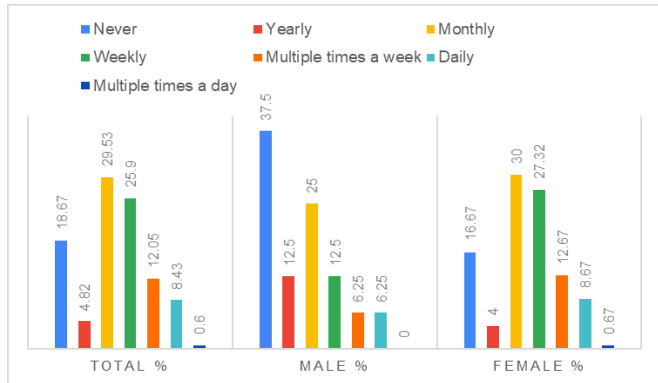
Table 12: Visiting friends' homepage

S.No.	Visiting friends' homepage	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	24.69	37.5	23.33
2.	Yearly	21.08	31.25	20
3.	Monthly	30.14	25	30.67
4.	Weekly	13.86	0	15.33
5.	Multiple times a week	6.02	0	6.67
6.	Daily	3.61	6.25	3.33
7.	Multiple times a day	0.60	0	0.67
	Total	100	100	100

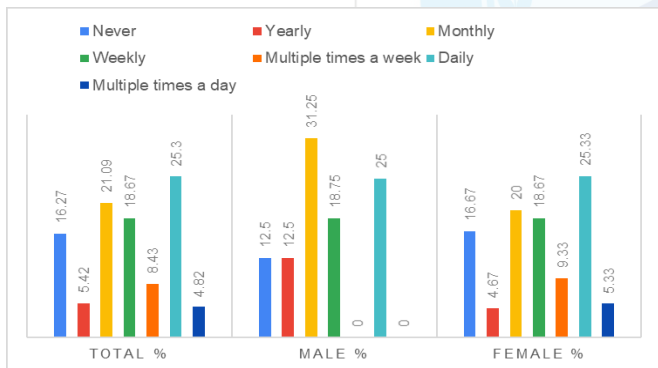




Graph 13: Graphical Representation of the Table- 12



Graph- 14: Graphical Representation of the Table- 13



Graph 15: Graphical Representation of the Table- 14

users used SNSs to share or re-send others' profiles on a monthly (23.49%) and weekly (11.45%) basis. Overall female users in the majority used SNSs to share or re-send others' profiles as compared to male users.

Table 12 shows that 30.14% of the students in totality visited their friends' homepages monthly. Female (30.67%) users more visited than male (25%) users who visited monthly. By doing so they might get to know about their friends' recent activities closely. 24.69% of users accepted that they never visited their friends' SNS homepages.

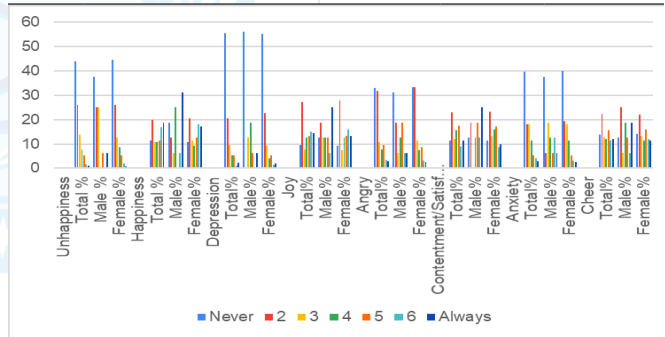
The majority of the SNSs users i.e. 29.53% commented on others' notes or photos on monthly basis (table 13). 25.9% of them commented on others' notes or photos weekly and 12.05% did multiple times a week. There 18.67% of the students never commented while 8.43% and 4.82% commented on others' notes or photos daily and yearly respectively. Overall female users were more who comment on others' notes or photos as compared to male users.

Table 13: Commenting on others' notes or photos

S.No.	Commenting	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	18.67	37.5	16.67
2.	Yearly	4.82	12.5	4
3.	Monthly	29.53	25	30
4.	Weekly	25.90	12.5	27.32
5.	Multiple times a week	12.05	6.25	12.67
6.	Daily	8.43	6.25	8.67
7.	Multiple times a day	0.60	0	0.67
	Total	100	100	100

Table 14: Checking others' comments or messages on your profiles

S.No.	Checking comments	Total %	Male %	Female %
1.	Never	16.27	12.5	16.67
2.	Yearly	5.42	12.5	4.67
3.	Monthly	21.09	31.25	20
4.	Weekly	18.67	18.75	18.67
5.	Multiple times a week	8.43	0	9.33
6.	Daily	25.30	25	25.33
7.	Multiple times a day	4.82	0	5.33
	Total	100	100	100



Graph 16: Graphical Representation of the Table- 15

Table 14 shows that regarding checking others' comments or messages on their profiles 25.3% of students accepted that they were used to checking others' comments on their profiles. Which the female percentage was 25.33% and the male percentage was 25%. 16.27% were such prospective teachers who claimed that they never checked others' comments or messages on their profiles.

Objective 2: Analysis of Affective Experience of Using the Social Networking Sites by Prospective Teachers

Social Networking Sites users shared their experiences and accepted the following effects while using SNSs.

Table- 15 depicts that the majority of the users i.e. 43.98% of which 44.67% were females and 37.5% were males never experienced unhappiness while using social networking sites. While 1.2% of users accepted that they always experienced unhappiness

Table- 15: Effects of using SNSs

	Never	2	3	4	5	6	Always
Unhappiness							
Total %	43.98	25.9	13.86	7.83	5.42	1.81	1.20
Male %	37.5	25	25	0	6.25	0	6.26
Female%	44.67	26	12.67	8.67	5.33	2	0.67
Happiness							
Total %	11.45	19.88	10.84	10.84	11.45	16.87	18.67
Male%	18.75	12.5	6.25	25	0	6.25	31.25
Female%	10.67	20.67	11.33	9.33	12.67	18	17.33
Depression							
Total%	55.42	20.48	9.64	5.42	5.42	1.2	2.41
Male%	56.25	0	12.5	18.75	6.25	0	6.25
Female%	55.33	22.67	9.33	4	5.33	1.33	2
Joy							
Total%	9.64	27.11	7.83	12.65	13.25	15.06	14.46
Male%	12.5	18.75	12.5	12.5	12.5	6.25	25
Female%	9.33	28	7.33	12.67	13.33	16	13.33
Angry							
Total%	33.13	31.93	10.84	7.83	9.64	3.61	3.01
Male%	31.25	18.75	6.25	12.5	18.75	6.25	6.25
Female%	33.33	33.33	11.33	7.33	8.67	3.33	2.67
Contentment/Satisfaction							
Total%	11.45	22.89	12.05	15.66	17.47	9.04	11.45
Male%	12.5	18.75	0	12.5	18.75	12.5	25
Female%	11.33	23.33	13.33	16	17.33	8.67	10
Anxiety							
Total%	39.76	18.07	18.07	11.45	5.42	4.22	3.01
Male%	37.5	6.25	18.75	12.5	6.25	12.5	6.25
Female%	40	19.33	18	11.33	5.33	3.33	2.67
Cheer							
Total%	13.86	22.29	12.65	12.05	15.66	11.45	12.05
Male%	12.5	25	6.25	18.75	12.5	6.25	18.75
Female%	14	22	13.33	11.33	16	12	11.33

with using SNSs, among them male prospective teachers were more than females.

A total of 11.45% were such users who never experienced happiness on using SNSs. Among them, males were more than female students. While 18.67% were such users who always experience happiness on using SNSs. Among them, male users were 31.25% and female users were 17.33%.

The majority of the users i.e., 55.42% never experienced depression on using SNSs of which 56.25% were males and 55.33% were females. While 2.41% were such users who always experience depression on using SNSs. Among them, male users were 6.25% and female users were 2%.

A total of 9.64% of the users never experienced joy in using SNSs on contrary 14.46% were such users who always experience joy in using SNSs.

The majority of the users i.e., 33.13% never experience anger on using SNSs of which 33.33% are females and 31.25% are males. While 3.01% are such users who always experience anger on using SNSs. Among them, male users (6.25%) are more as compared to female users (2.67%).

A total of 11.45% of the users never experienced contentment/satisfaction while using SNSs and the same percentage of students accepted that they always experienced contentment/satisfaction on using SNSs. There were more male users (25%) than female users (10%).

Most users, i.e. 39.76%, never experienced anxiety about using SNSs. While 3.01% were such users who always experienced anxiety about using SNSs.

A total of 13.86% of the users never experienced cheer on using SNSs of which 12.5% were males and 14% were females. While 12.05%



were such users who always experienced cheer on using SNSs.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

On analyzing the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) usage by prospective teachers i.e. B.Ed. students the following has been revealed through the investigation. The analysis of the basic usage pattern of social networking sites revealed that prospective teachers at large (75.29%) started using SNSs on daily basis and even multiple times a day during the pandemic. Time analysis has revealed that the duration of their visit to SNSs varies from 15 min or less to more than 4 hours each time they visited these sites for various purposes. Possibly the wider usage of social networking sites was due to the pandemic period which had left people with the only option to remain in touch with the world. Whereas, using SNSs by a few other users on a weekly and multiple times a week basis was also been marked.

Social Networking Sites provide the opportunity to make friends with people who may be in the network of family members, groups of friends, co-workers or other acquaintances. The friendship trend in the study revealed that 81.93% of the users had up to 200 friends and 18.07% had more than 200 friends. 24.09% of the students had friends on SNSs who were personally known to them, while 8.43% of students were even open to strangers accepting them as their friends on SNSs. Therefore, the findings prove that social networking sites help connect people with common interests across physical boundaries. Social networking sites provide a platform for instant interaction and communication with people. This phenomenal feature of SNSs has grown its popularity among users, especially today's youth. The respondents' data revealed that students mostly preferred to comment on others' posts or notes to interact owing to their feasible time. Social networking sites offer users a platform to portray themselves to the audience. With this interesting feature, people post their pictures or share information regarding themselves.

To conclude social networking sites are a vital platform for sharing and gaining information. The features like instant interaction with friends, showcasing one's feelings and achievements and letting people know about you, getting to know what is happening around the world and the overall effect it creates on us cannot be ignored.

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