



## **An Analysis of New Norms in Society is the Prevalence of Social Media Addiction**

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### **Abstract**

*Digital era has transformed interaction among individuals. People communicate with one another not just in person, but also through social media platforms. Since the beginning of social media sites, they have never failed to engage masses especially youth. Meanwhile, social media users have to explore the platform and create their existence in the form of a profile, they can be considered active social media consumers. Therefore, social media platforms compete when it comes to attracting users and have engaged large number of consumers based on interest and purpose. Such interaction through Facebook, Instagram and other networks has led to number of problems. One of the major concerns is increased addiction of social media. This study aims to dissect the social media addiction as new social norm particularly among youth. With key objectives; to find the frequency of social media consumption among youth, and to measure the scope of social media engagement among youth, the study is quantitative in nature. A survey method is used to collect relevant data from youth (university students). Results of the study suggest that due to compulsive use of social media, irrespective of the incentive behind, it has become a new cultural norm to be addicted to social media content.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Addiction, Social norm, Youth, Consumption.*



## **Introduction**

The emergence of cyber era has made social media the most frequent aspect of daily life. Statistics show that by the end of July 2020, there has been nearly four billion active social media consumers across the world and more than half of them were found to be Facebook users (Hussain & Starcevic, 2020).

Social media has enabled people to expand their social circle beyond the geographical boundaries and have friends of their choice without having any time restriction. In current years, world has gone through significant changes in terms of quantitative and qualitative growth of internet consumption in the form of social networking and masses of people who use them. Social networks comprise websites and applications that enable users to share “content, ideas, opinions, beliefs, feelings, and personal, social, and educational experiences”. Additionally, social networks make communication between a diverse group of users on a worldwide scale very simpler (Alahmar, 2016).

Social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) have successfully captivated a considerable part of lives of people. Such platforms have fascinated people in a way that these have become significant aspect of human communication. These means of communication boost social interaction and interpersonal communication while serving as an aid to keep up relationships. Above all these means also serve as tools of self expression (Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann, & McCarthy, 2018).

The importance of social networks in classrooms cannot be overstated. As a means of interaction and a lifeline to others (Manca & Ranieri, 2017). Similarly, as they provide access to wide range of information resources, social networks have provided number of advantages in education and learning. In group interaction barriers have been reduced and ease has been ensured through telecommunication resources. Thus, an environment of collaborative learning has emerged through internet-based communication. They also encourage to focus on self-learning techniques, engage learners with teachers and each other so that active learning can be supported and social learning can be improved (Al-Dhanhani, Mizouni, Otrok, & Al-Rubaie, 2015).

Generally, new technologies and the emergence of internet-based networks have facilitated human communication in number of ways. Apart from enabling the quality of global interaction through improved communication channels, technology and internet assisted social networks have borne some serious threats as well (Avcı, Çelikden, Eren, & Aydenizöz, 2015).



Likewise, the improper use of social networks can affect psychological well-being of users. For instance, sometimes consumers are so engaged in using Facebook, Instagram or other social media sites that they feel upset while unable to use it during work. Such consumption of social media is often referred as “social media addiction” (Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang, 2019). The widespread use of social media platforms is often characterized as a novel manifestation of a non-chemical dependency. The beginnings of social media addiction may be attributed to psychological disturbances or emotional deficiencies experienced throughout infancy, as well as individual personality features and psychosocial circumstances, as analyzed within the framework of dynamic psychology theory. Social media addiction is a term used to describe the psychological issues associated with excessive use of social media platforms and the allocation of significant amounts of time to these sites, which subsequently impacts various aspects of individuals' offline lives, including their occupation, academic pursuits, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being, leading to significant disruptions in their daily functioning (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2012).

Since its launch in 2004, number of studies have examined Facebook addiction and subsequent impact on various spheres of life such as academic, professional, personal and interpersonal relationships etc. (Çakici, Babayiğit, Karaaziz, & Cumhuri, 2020).

Overdependence of technology has directed to an inadequacy of social skills. It can leave individuals unable to involve in meaningful discussions for such skills are being compromised for constant engagement, leading to short-term attention and a reduced ability to retain information. In such a way individuals have been described as “alone together”, as constantly connected through technology, but isolated in reality (Turkle, 2013).

The apparent desire to be online may result in habitual use of social networking sites. Users love to use social media without any interruption. Such compulsive engagement with social media sites, in extreme cases, may lead to symptoms and out comes usually related to social media addictions (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011).

Studies have also found that for some consumers the use of social media can become the only most important activity to get engaged in. It can lead to preoccupation with the use of social networking sites. Thus, these sites are often used for mood modification, fleeing pleasure and distraction from bad feeling in real life experiences (Shorter, Kuss, van-Rooij, Griffiths, & Schoenmakers, 2014).



Among social media application found in mobile phones Snapchat, WhatsApp, and TikTok were found to be the three dominant application that participant frequently used. WhatsApp was the most regularly used application by the study participants, followed by Snapchat. Studies have found that social media is addictive in nature by design. It has been developed in way to ensure constant engagement of users. People are made to engage in excessive and compulsive use of social media (Wegmann, Oberst, Stodt, & Brand, 2017).

### **Objectives**

This study focuses on following research objectives;

- To find the frequency of social media consumption among youth
- To find the scope of social media consumption among youth.
- To locate the purpose of social media interaction among youth.
- To find the level of social media interaction among youth.

### **Research questions**

The following are some research issues that will be addressed in this study;

**RQ1:** Does frequent social media consumption lead to social media addiction?

**RQ2:** Does constant engagement on social media has become a cultural norm?

### **Literature review**

Social media use is rapidly becoming a normal practice. Though, unnecessary and obsessive use of social media platforms may result to an addictive behavior for consumers, that can result in harmful consequences on routine life in multi-dimensional ways (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

Similarly, another study also noted that social media consumption is related to some psychological effects such as few symptoms of depression and anxiety (Mamun & Griffiths, 2019).

A related study in Saudi Arabia found that social media sites such as Snapchat, and WhatsApp were the most frequent social media choices among female university students (Al-Saud, et al., 2019). Teenagers predominantly seem to have pledged to new cultural norm of recurrent online interacting. They tend to create virtual spaces which apparently serve their desire to belong (Boyd, 2014).



Research has also specified that a “fear of missing out (FOMO)” may lead to social media addiction among users. This is because people who develop habit of worry for being unable to connect to their social media networks may grow impulsive behavior of checking their mobile which can consequently lead to an addiction of social media (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

“Uses and gratifications theory” undertakes that there is exists vigorous media using consumers. Therefore, different social media networks have developed a culture of competition and tend to attract more consumers. Since people are more self-aware of their media usage, and familiar with their interests, a more dynamic social media structure has emerged (West & Turner, 2007).

Meanwhile, social media audience are to explore the site and create their existence in the form of a profile, so that they can be taken as active social media consumers. Therefore, social media networks contest while attracting users and have engaged large number of consumers based on interest and purpose. For instance, Instagram is trying to develop such features that of what a user finds on Snapchat. consequently, it is attempting to attract traffic from Snapchat to its own app. Thus, combining the consumers from both sites.

There are number of concerns related to the motives of users getting engage with social media, why they interact and why they pick the very network they engage with. Though some of these can be predictable by observing certain aspects like age and gender, motivation, personality, social environment that user belong to etc. A related study conducted on Facebook usage and addiction noted that gender played key role in content choices for example men were found to be more addicted to introverted behavior while women prone to be behavioral addiction of social interaction (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg, & Pallesen, 2012).

The commonplace nature of social media these days have certainly made it almost unavoidable part of routine life. One of the most important factors is the “inescapabilty” of its nature with subsequent masses of user generated profiles than ever. Studies have already found that unavoidable nature of social media visit different sites of choice at least once in day (Smith & Anderson, 2018).

Connectivity and interaction are also important motive of social media use. While social media can contribute to facilitate face-to-face communications, text-based social media platforms and communities can be more isolating for users. A recent study acknowledges that younger generations “seem to prefer isolation and they seem to be in their own imaginary world rather than [with] real life friends and family” (Subramanian, 2017).



Individuals may meet new individuals and create relationships with existing followers of popular social networks via the use of social media without being constrained by physical location or the passage of time. However, users' psychological health and well-being may be negatively impacted by engaging in problematic behavior on social media. For instance, some Instagram users have become so dependent on the platform that they experience negative emotions if they are prevented from using it while they are at work. Addiction to social media is a term that is often used to refer to such problematic usage of these platforms (Ponnusamy, Iranmanesh, Foroughi, & Hyun, 2020).

Social media addiction encourages users to sometimes spend too much time a day using it. Moreover, it also leads them to become excessively engaged with it, and develop irrepressible desire to use the social media site. Subsequently, addictive engagement of social media can affect mental health and wellness of users and result in symptoms like depression and anxiety (Lin, et al., 2016).

A study based on female university students in Saudi Arabia found that social media addiction is noted with a substantial positive relation with body mass index (BMI) of the participants of study, but not related with body image. Similar study in Saudi Arabia discovered that social media use has a negative impact on academic performance of the dental students (Halboub, et al., 2016).

An exploratory approach used in a study focusing Chinese college students (16-23 years of age), noted that gender, impulsive nature, anxiety, social anxiety, and undesirable biases of attention proved to be among key risk factors involving social media addiction. Similarly, social media addiction is also found associated with poor sleep patterns, self-image, and body mass index (BMI) of the individual (Zhao, Jia, Wang, Xiao, & Wu, 2022).

The widespread use of social media platforms is often characterized as a novel manifestation of a non-substance addiction. The roots of social media addiction may be attributed to psychological disturbances or emotional deficiencies experienced throughout infancy, as well as individual personality features and sociocultural circumstances, as examined through the lens of dynamic psychology theory. In a similar vein, social media addiction pertains to psychological issues arising from the excessive utilization of social media platforms and the allocation of significant amounts of time to these websites, thereby impeding individuals' engagement in other real-life



social activities, including work and academic pursuits, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being, ultimately leading to a disruption of their daily lives (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2012). Moreover, another study suggest that social media sites pose negative effect on physical as well as psychological health. It can also lead to behavioral irregularities, anxiety, depression and mania. Likewise, the results of a study conducted on German students expressed a positive relationship Facebook addiction and narcissist character, stress, depression and anxiety (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2017). Similarly, it is held that people with anxiety, stress, depression and low self-esteem are more vulnerable to addiction to social media networks (Guedes, et al., 2016).

A study related that characteristic such as sociodemographic (i.e., gender), academic performance, and psychological state (depression and anxiety) have been found allied with social media addiction found prevailing while studying medical students in Saudi Arabia (Abdullah, et al., 2023).

Collectively it has been claimed that use of social media may consist a wide range of consumption motives and requirements, extending from friendly relations, simple conversations to romantic events. Such activities additionally strengthen social media engagement while considering natural roots in many aspects of the daily life of consumers. With regards to a social mediated addiction standpoint, this is related to the work on Internet based addiction which often pronounces between addictions to specific use of applications on the Internet (Pontes, Szabo, & Griffiths, 2015).

Overuse of social media encourages extended network browsing and searching, which can result in risky behaviors such as sleep deficiency and ultimately enhance negative psychological behaviors (Seabrook, Kern, & Rickard, 2016).

Correlated with “FOMO” and addiction of smart phone is significantly new conception of “nomophobia”. It is often described as “no mobile phone phobia”, i.e., the “constant fear of being without mobile phone”. It is further related as regular and time-consuming use, feelings of anxiety when the phone is not available, “ringxiety” it is inferred as “repeatedly checking one’s phone for messages, sometimes leading to phantom ring tones”. Similarly, constant availability, preferring mobile communication over face-to-face communication, and financial problems as a consequence of use of mobile (Bragazzi & Puente, 2014).



Another study noted that male students were found with higher social media addiction tendencies as compared to female students. These findings are related to a preceding study that focused on students at the University of Sharjah studying medicine in the United Arab Emirates. It was observed that gender and social media addiction has statistically significant relationship. Meanwhile, male medical students were significantly more addicted to social media consumption than female students (Alnjadat, Hmaid, Samha, Kilani, & Hasswan, 2019).

### Methodology

Survey method have been used to collect data from defined sample of population. A closed ended questionnaire has been designed and sent to 200 respondents comprised of 100 male and 100 female university students.

### Findings and analysis

Results and findings of the survey are presented in the form of graphs and tables.

Figure 1  
*How often do you use social media?*

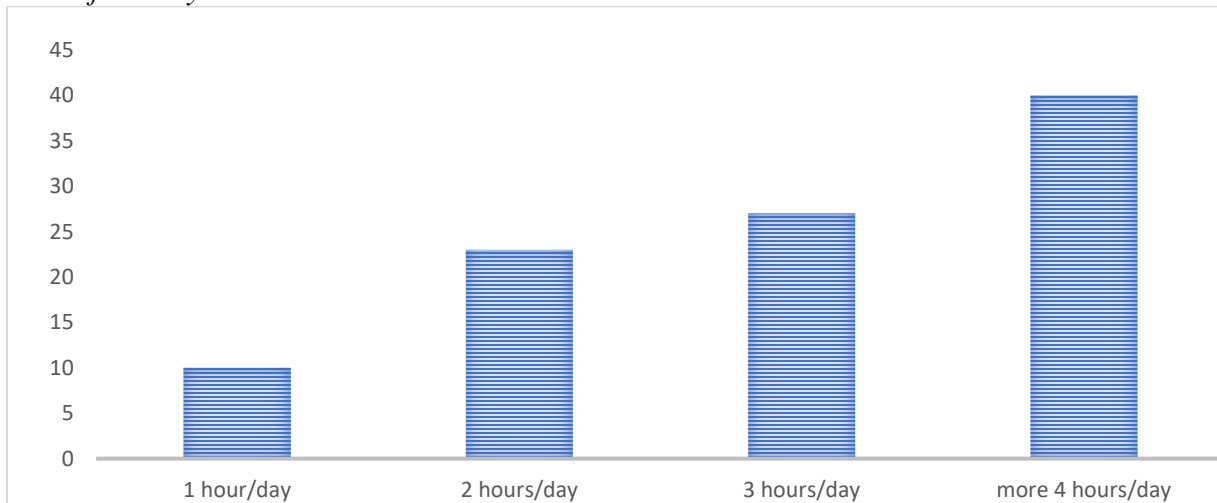


Table 1

Statement	1 hour a day	2 hour a day	3 hours a day	More than 4 hours
How often do you use social media?	10.5 %	22.5 %	27 %	40 %

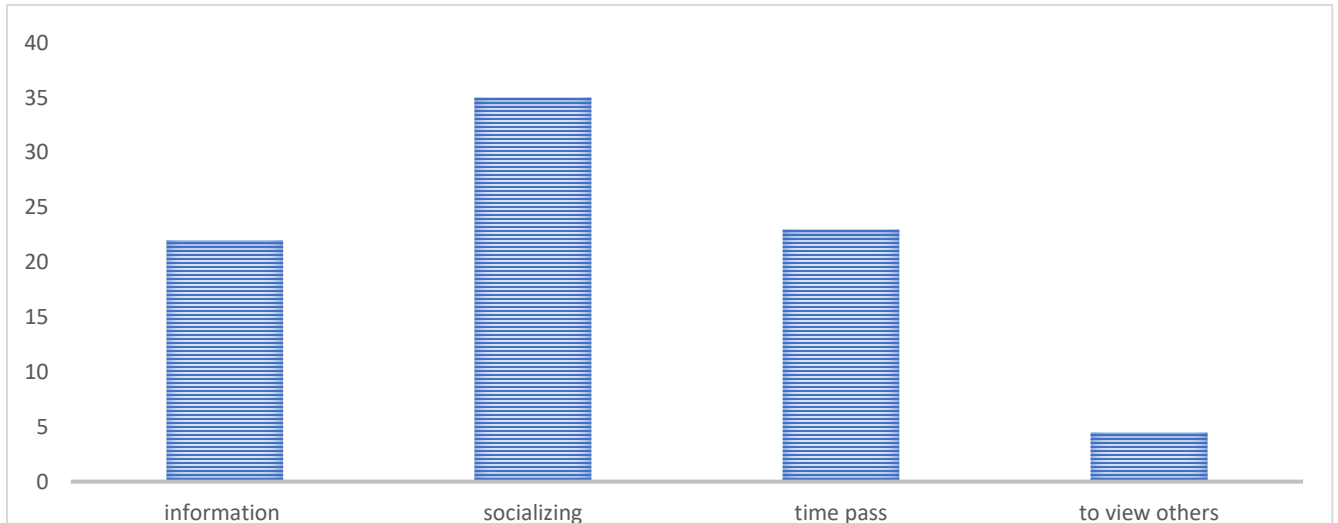
Figure 1, table 1 show the percentage of responses noted against the given statement. Findings illustrate that maximum number of respondents i.e., 40 % use social media more than 4 hours a





day. However, 27 % use it for 3 hours a day, 22.5 % use it for 2 hours a day while only 10.5 % consume social media for 1 hour a day.

Figure 2



Why do you use social media?

Table 2

Statement	Information	Socializing	Time pass	To view other's life
Why do you use social media?	22 %	35 %	23 %	20 %

Figure 2, table 2 show the percentage of the responses observed against the given statement. Values show that maximum number of respondents (35 %) use social media for socialization, 22 % use it for seeking information, 23 % use it for time pass and 20 % use it to see the life of other people.



Figure 3

*What is your favorite social media site?*

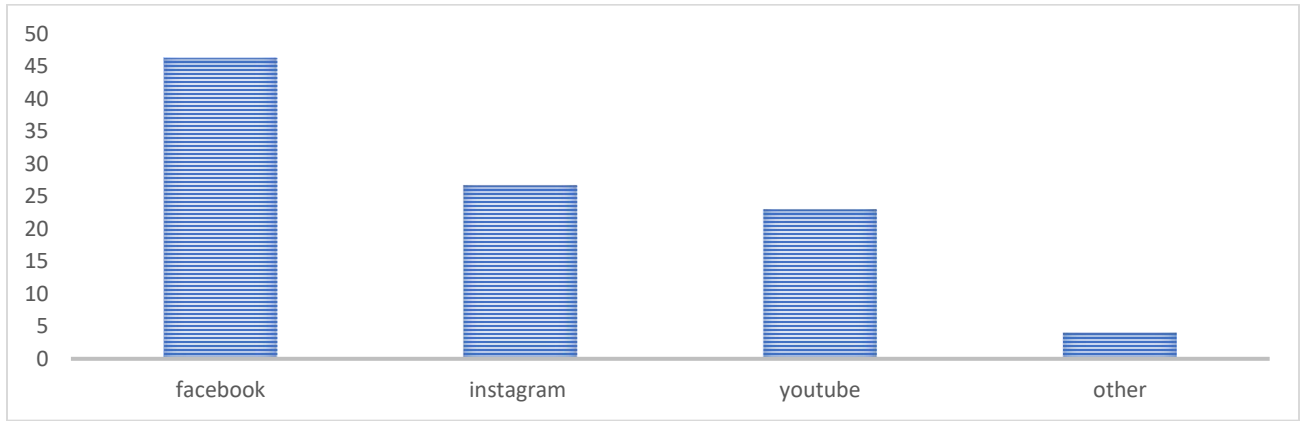


Table 3

Statement	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	Other
What is your favorite social media site?	46.3 %	26.7 %	23 %	4 %

Figure 3, table 3 show the values of responses recorded against the given statement. Maximum number of respondents (46.3 %) chose Facebook as their favorite social media site, while 26.7 % preferred Instagram, 23 % YouTube and 4 % like other platforms.

Figure 4

*Do you use social media during work/class?*

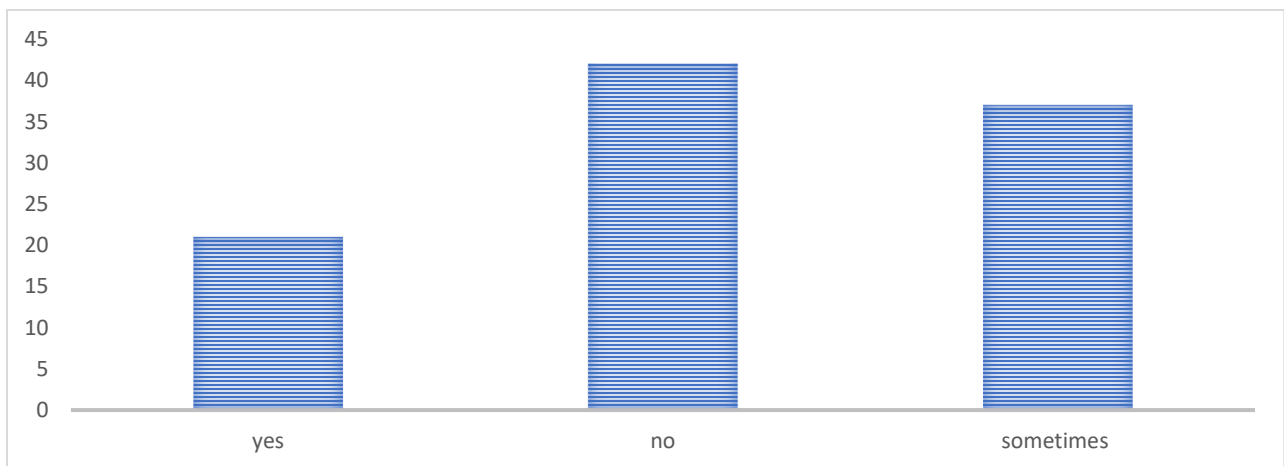




Table 4

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Do you use social media during work/class?	21 %	42 %	37 %

Figure 4, table 4 show the percentage of responses observed against the given statement. Values show that 21 % of respondents use social media during work/class, while 42% do not use social media during work/class. 37 % of the respondents use social media during work/class only sometimes.

Figure 5

*Do you like to view other's profile on social media?*

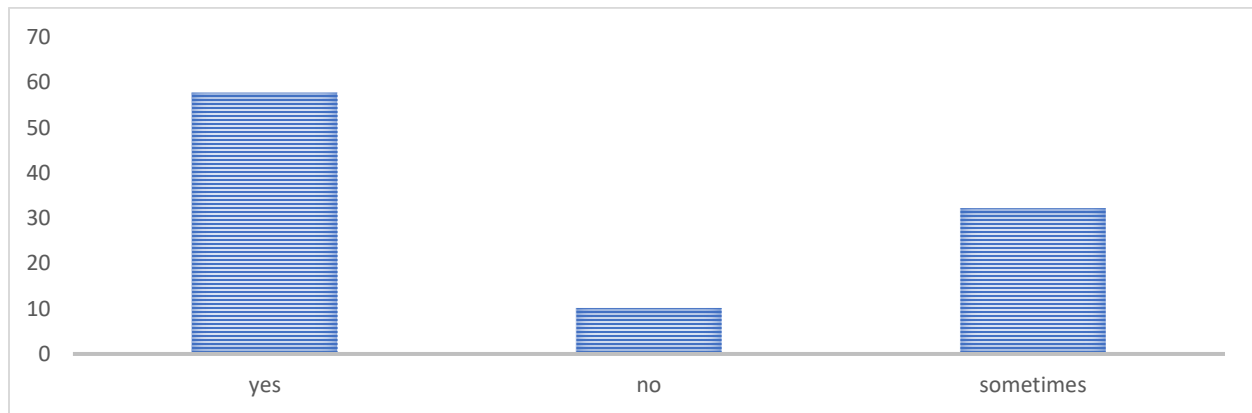


Table 5

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Do you like to view other's profile on social media?	57.7 %	10.1 %	32.2 %

Figure 5, table 5 show percentage of responses noted against given statement. Values illustrate that 57.7 % respondents like to view others profile on social media, while only 10.1 % do not like to do so. Similarly, 32.2 % like to see others profile but only sometimes.



Figure 6

*Do you adapt yourself with what you see on social media?*

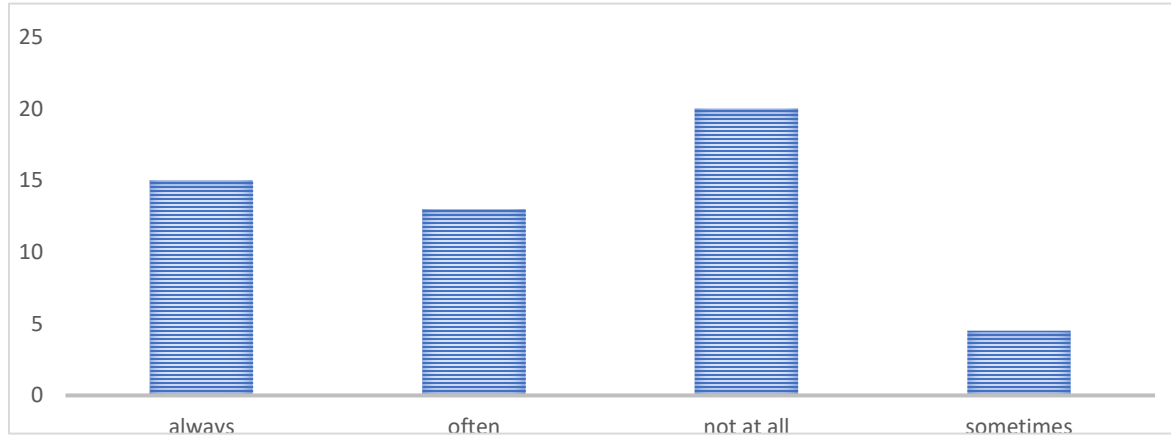


Table 6

Statement	Always	Often	Not at all	Sometimes
Do you adapt yourself with what you see on social media?	15 %	13 %	20 %	52 %

Figure 6, table 6 demonstrate percentage of responses recorded against given statement. 15 % respondents always adapt to what they see on social media, 13% often do so, 20% never adapt while 52 % adapt to what they see on social media but only sometimes.

Figure 7

*Do you feel isolated when not using social media?*

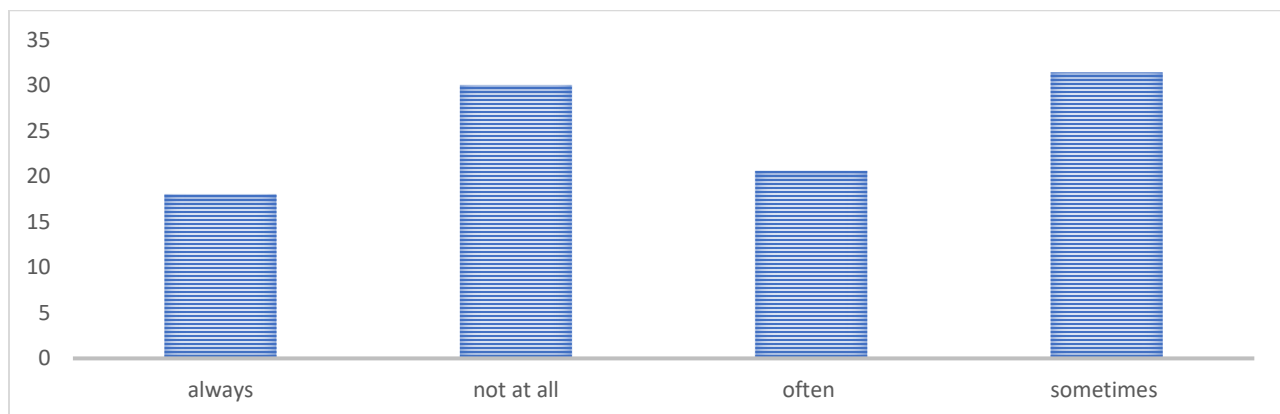




Table 7

Statement	Always	Not at all	Often	Sometimes
Do you feel isolated when not using social media?	18 %	30 %	20.6 %	31.4 %

Figure 7, table 7 show percentage of responses observed against the given statement. 18 % of the respondents always feel isolated when not using social media, 30 % never feel so, 20.6 % often feel isolated while, 31.4 % feel isolated while using social media but only sometimes.

Figure 8

*Do you feel incomplete while not posted/viewed on social media?*

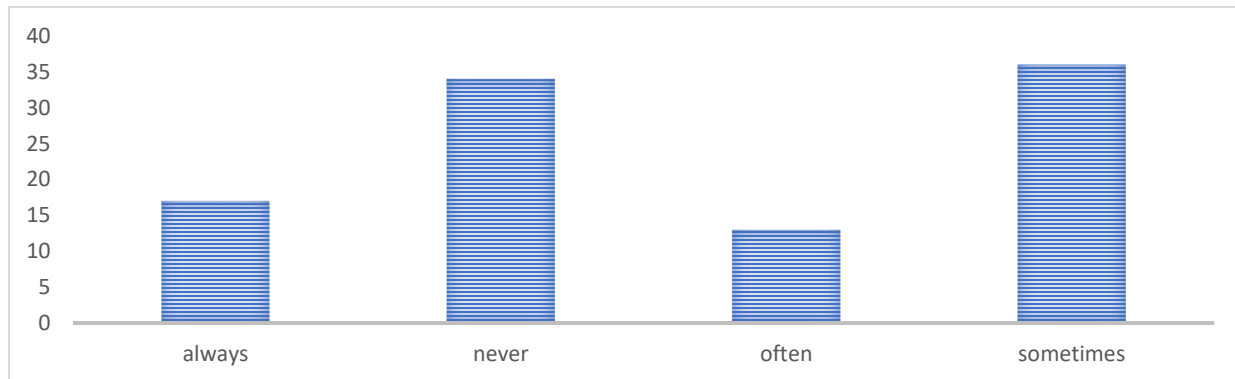


Table 8

Statement	Always	Never	Often	Sometimes
Do you feel incomplete while not posted/viewed on social media?	17 %	34 %	13 %	36 %

Figure 8, table 8 show percentage of responses of the given statement. 17 % respondents show that they always feel incomplete while having not posted or viewed social media, 34 % never feel that way, 13 % often feel that way while 36 % feel it only sometimes.



Figure 9

*Do you think that use of social media keeps you up to date?*

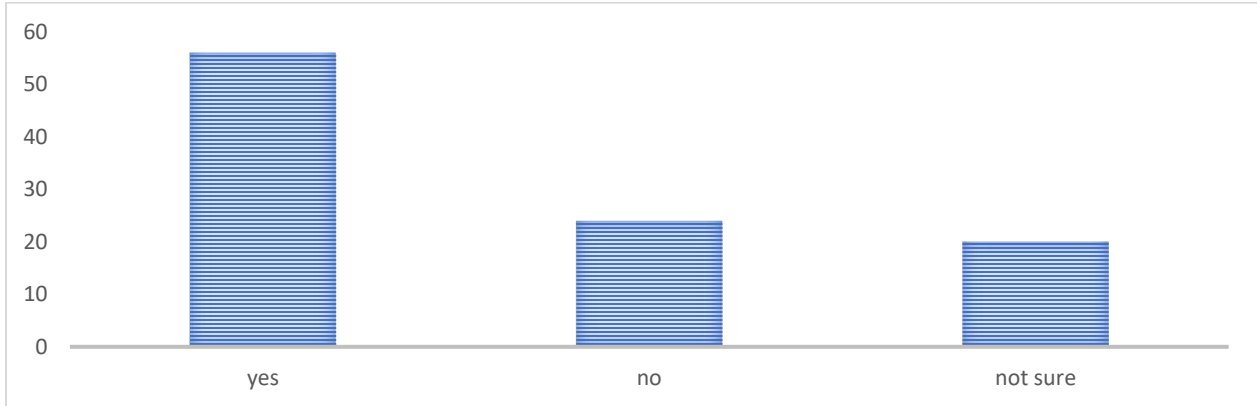


Table 9

Statement	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you think that use of social media keeps you up to date?	56 %	24 %	20 %

Figure 9, table 9 show percentage of responses noted for given statement. Values show that 56 % of the respondents think that use of social media keeps them updated, while 24 % do not think so. However, 20 % remained unsure about the given statement.

Figure 10

*Do you have more friends on social media than real life?*

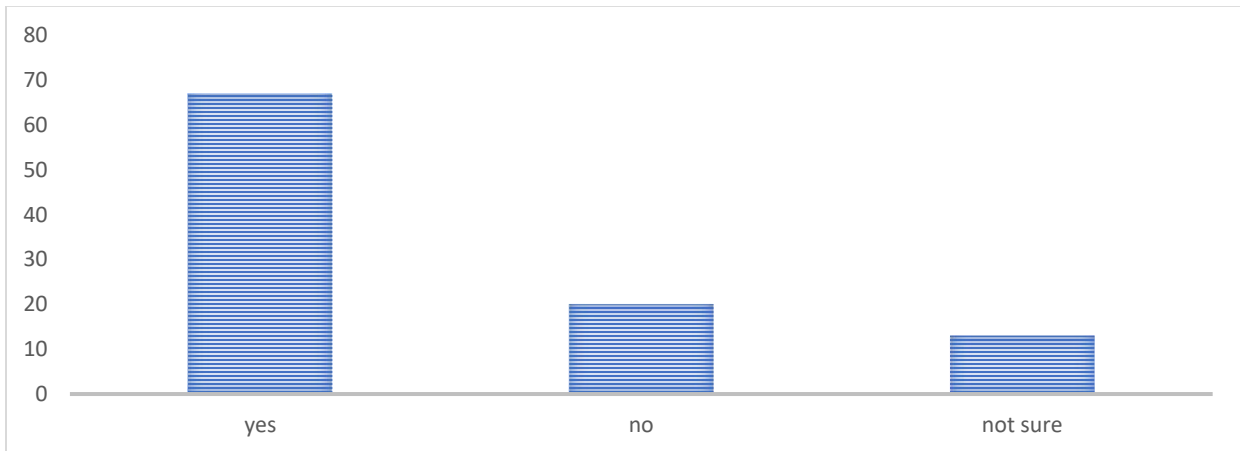




Table 10

Statement	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you have more friends on social media than real life?	67 %	20 %	13 %

Figure 10, table 10 show percentage of responses observed for given statement. Majority of the respondents 67 % believe that they have more friends on social media than in real life. 20 % do not think so while 13 % remained unsure about the given statement.

Figure 11

*Do you feel better while posting/viewing on social media?*

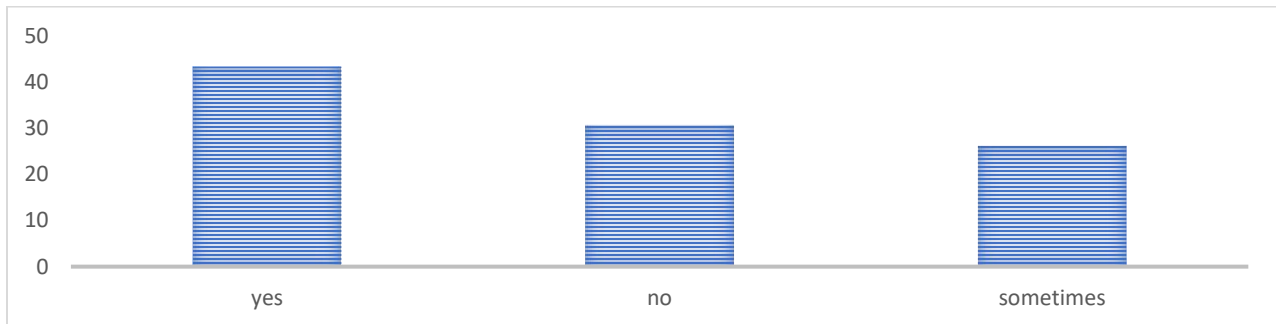


Table 11

Statement	Yes	No	Sometimes
Do you feel better while posting/viewing on social media?	43.3 %	30.6 %	26.1 %

Figure 11 and table 11 show responses of the participants of survey for given question. 43.3 % respondents feel better while posting or viewing on social media, while 30.6 % do not feel that way. 26.1 % feel better while posing but only sometimes.



Figure 12  
*For how long you can resist social media use?*

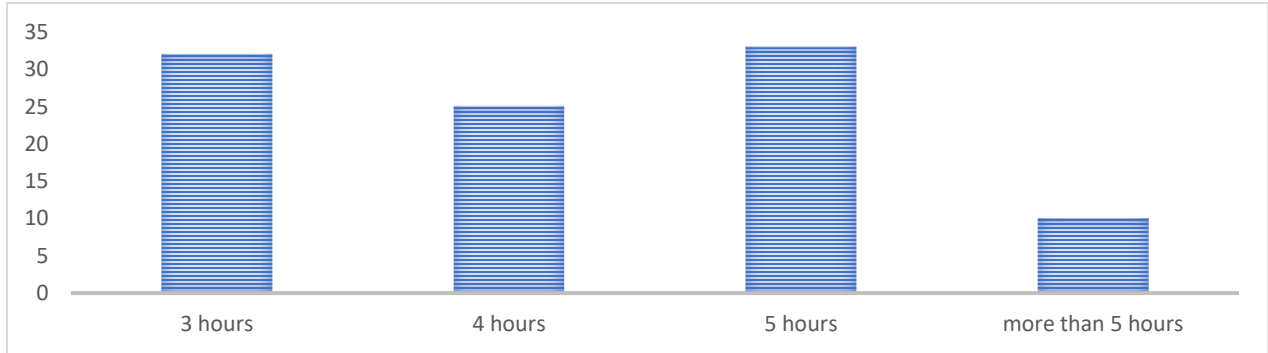


Table 12

Statement	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	More than 5 hours
For how long you can resist social media use?	32 %	25 %	33 %	10 %

Figure 12, table 12 show the responses of given question. Values show that 32 % of respondents can resist social media for 3 hours, 25 % for 4 hours, 33 % for 5 hours and 10 % can resist social media use for more than 5 hours.

Figure 13  
*Do you feel happy/satisfied while using social media?*

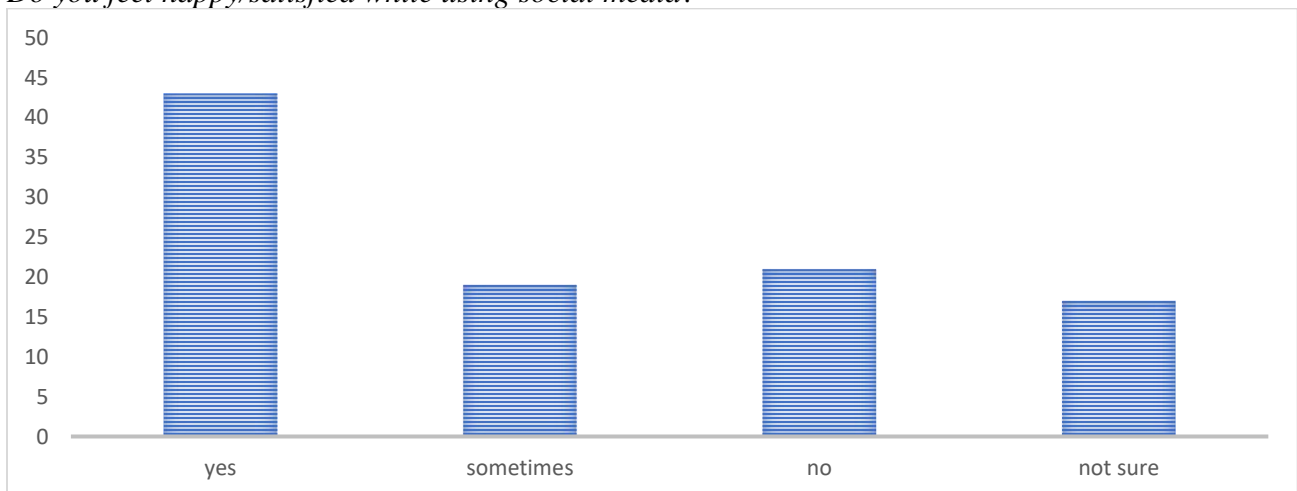






Table 13

Statement	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not sure
Do you feel happy/satisfied while using social media?	43 %	19 %	21 %	17 %

Figure 13, table 13 show percentage of responses for the given question. 43 % respondents feel happy/satisfied while using social media, 19 % feel satisfied only sometimes, 21% do not feel happy or satisfied while using social media and 17 % remained unsure about the given statement.

Figure 14

*How frequently do you check your mobile?*

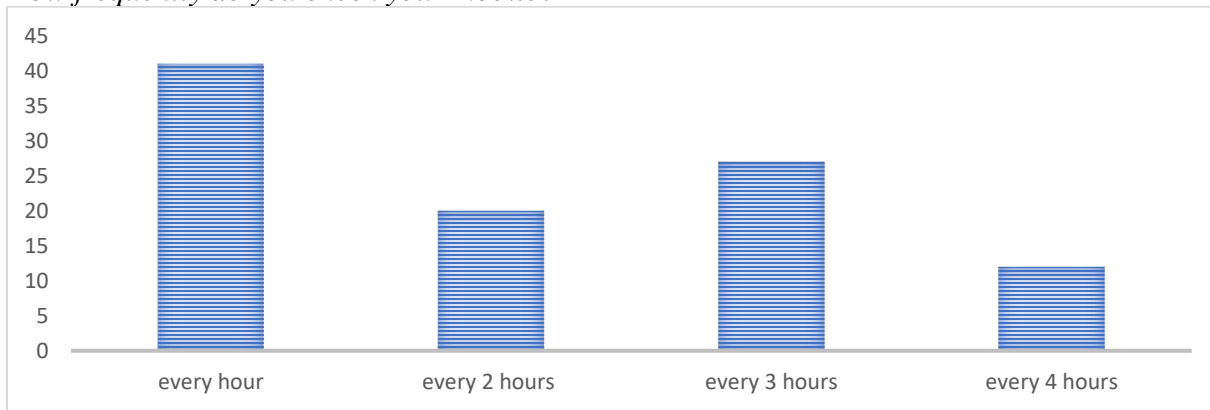


Table 14

Statement	Every hour	Every 2 hours	Every 3 hours	Every 4 hours
How frequently do you check your mobile?	41 %	20 %	27 %	12 %

Figure 14, table 14 show percentage of responses observed for the given statement. 41 % respondents check their mobile every hour, 20 % check it every 2 hours, 27 % check their mobile every 3 hours while 12 % check their mobile every four hours.



Figure 15  
 Do you feel dissatisfied while not using social media?

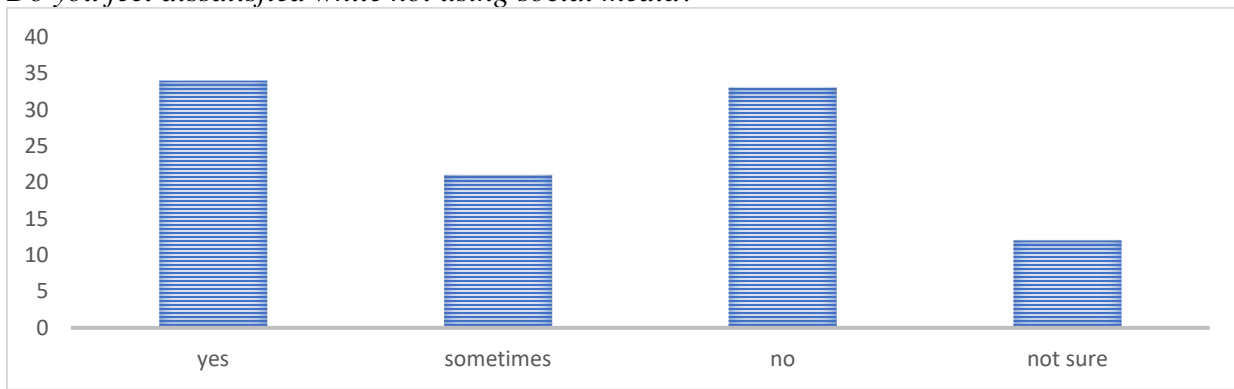


Table 15

Statement	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not sure
Do you feel dissatisfied while not using social media?	34 %	21 %	33 %	12 %

Figure 15, table 15 show percentage of responses for the given question. Values show that 34 % participants feel dissatisfied while not using social media, 33 % do not feel dissatisfied, 21 % feel dissatisfied only sometimes and 12 % remained unsure about the given statement.

Figure 16  
 Do you prefer to use social media over talking with friends/family?

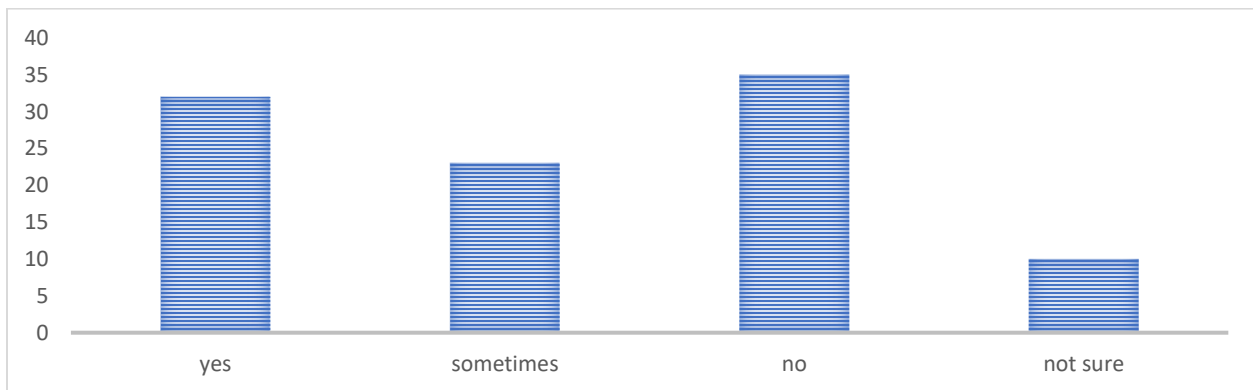


Table 16

Statement	Yes	Sometimes	No	Not sure
Do you prefer to use social media over talking with friends/family?	32 %	23 %	35 %	10 %



Figure 16, table 16 show percentage of responses recorded against given statement. Values show that 32 % participants prefer social media over conversation with friends or family, while 23 % sometimes prefer social media, 35 % never prefer social media use over talks with friends or family and 10 % remained unsure about the given statement.

## Conclusion and Discussion

### Discussion

In the contemporary digital age social media has become integral part of society. People consume social media for different purposes depending on variety of choices. Findings of this study also strengthen this notion. Figure 2, table 2 show that maximum number of respondents (35 %) use social media for socialization, 22 % use it for seeking information, 23 % use it for time pass and 20 % use it to see the life of other people. Turkle (2013) noted that there is a constant self-perceived sense of connectivity, which has led to transformed online behaviors. Similarly figure 3, table 3 show the maximum number of respondents (46.3 %) picked Facebook as their favorite social media site, while 26.7 % preferred Instagram, 23 % YouTube and 4 % like other platforms. It reveals that being online citizens people always prefer to stay connect through different social media platforms of their choice. This notion is further supported with figure 4, table 4 that show the values such as 21 % of respondents use social media during work/class, while 42% do not use social media during work/class. 37 % of the respondents use social media during work/class only sometimes. It is noted that total 58% of the respondents like to engage on social media during work or class. Exposure to social world through social media platforms people tend to compare themselves what they see on social media. A similar trend was observed in the findings as 67 % respondents adapt to what they see on social media, 13% often do so, 20% never adapt. Similarly, literature can also be related that youth engage on social media as way of belonging or association (Boyd, 2012). Thus, figure 7, table 7 that 18 % of the respondents always feel isolated when not using social media, 30 % never feel so, 20.6 % often feel isolated while, 31.4 % feel isolated while using social media but only sometimes. Additionally, 17 % respondents show that they always feel incomplete while not having posted or viewed on social media, 13 % often feel that way while 36 % feel it only sometimes. Kuss & Griffiths (2017) have found that research has also specified that a fear of missing out (FOMO)



may lead to social media addiction among users. This is because people who develop habit of worry for being unable to connect to their social media networks may grow impulsive behavior of checking their mobile which can consequently lead to an addiction of social media. Likewise figure 11 and table 11 show that 43.3 % respondents feel better while posting or viewing on social media, while 30.6 % do not feel that way. 26.1 % feel better while posing but only sometimes. Moreover, findings also show that majority i.e., 56 % of the respondents think that use of social media keeps them updated, while 24 % do not think so. However, 20 % remained unsure about the given statement. Results of the study also show that 43 % respondents feel happy/satisfied while using social media. 34 % participants feel dissatisfied while not using social media, 33 % do not feel dissatisfied, 21 % feel dissatisfied only sometimes. Kuss & Griffiths (2011) also supported the notion. They found that apparent desire to be online may result in habitual use of social networking sites. Users love to use social media without any interruption. Such compulsive engagement with social media sites, in extreme cases, may lead to symptoms and out comes usually related to social media addictions. Moreover, values show that 32 % participants prefer social media over conversation with friends or family, while 23 % sometimes prefer social media, 35 % never prefer social media use over talks with friends or family and 10 % remained unsure about the given statement. Findings support the reviewed literature that social media users develop an impulsive need to be active on different social media networking sites.

## **Conclusion**

Online citizenship through social networking has gained increased popularity especially during last decade. individuals tend to engage on different social media platforms to connect with others who share similar interests. Findings of the study reveal that youth uses social media for variety of motives such as seeking information, socializing, time passing and viewing the lives of others. Irrespective of the nature of motive, youth has become a constant consumer of social media content. Their engagement on social media is more frequent using social media even in class or work as well. If unable to use, the perceived need to be online may lead to addiction of social media. It has been revealed that youth feel satisfied, updated, happy and associated due to social media presence. In order to present new insights into online social networking and addiction findings of the study propose that apparent nature of compulsive use of social media among, it has become a new social norm where people not using such networks are perceived as lacking in



some way. Social media consumption has become a cultural tradition as fear of missing out or isolation keep youth constantly engaged on social media. The emergence of new cultural integration in the form of social media addiction have ground for debate to evaluate the effects of such cultural addition in society.

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