



## AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT :

*This article examines the role of social media in various perspectives such as marketing, psychosocial, education, and most importantly generation gap perspective and it also describes both advantages and disadvantages of each perspective which shows how youth use social media for their marketing purpose such as buying and selling online, how usage of social media affects their mental health and circumstance around them, how social media plays an important role in education, how youth use it for non-educational purposes, and its relationship with the generation gap that results in psychosocial problems.*

**KEYWORDS :** social media, marketing, youth, perspective.

### INTRODUCTION

Social media has a wide range of online communication tools that can be viewed from various perspectives. Social media marketing has become a huge business which helps to contribute to the low cost of marketing and the amount of users and availability of user information which helps entrepreneurs to think in marketing perspective (Ernestad & Henriksson, 2010). The psychosocial perspective promotes a virtual form of communication. The term 'virtual' is used to explain things that are not real, but to take on the important aspects of the real (Margalit, 2014). The use of social networking in education can cause lack of motivation towards learning. Though students benefit from social networking in the education field, it seems to be used for non-academic purposes than for educational purposes (Zaidieh, 2012). Hurley (2018) describes that the way of communication, socialisation and maintaining friendships has been changed after the emergence of social media. Mental health issues like hopelessness, loss of interest in normal activities, insomnia, headaches, and worthlessness will lead the youth to suffer at certain stage in their lives. Likewise, most youngsters have become more adapted to using computers and social media than their parents. This technological divide has created a new generation gap. This study is aimed at explaining the generation gap perspective. According to Merriem Webster's Dictionary (2017), Social Media is a form of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create

online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Social Media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The term social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Social



media takes on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking (Baruah, 2012). United Nations (2017), have explained the social media by breaking down the terms as social and media which leads the people to understand in a simple way. The social part refers to interacting with other people by sharing and receiving information with them. The media part refers to an instrument of communication like the internet. The traditional forms of media are television, radio and newspaper. Tina Sharkey, CEO of Babycenter.com and former executive at iVillage Inc and America Online, Inc. (AOL) conveyed that she coined the term "social media" in the early days of iVillage Inc., where she was in charge of community building. There is no public evidence of her using the term before then. However, socialmedia.com, which is registered to Sharkey, first appeared in 1999 making it a late competitor by all accounts (Bercovici, 2010). In 1997, Ted Leonsis discussed the need to offer a platform where users can interact, entertain and participate in social environment online. Moving back to 1994, it was reported that Darrell Berry could have claimed the term while he was developing Matisse, an online media environment. Another technology strategist, Chris Shipley states that she merely popularised the term although she was unaware of the phrase being used prior to then. Hence, the term 'social media' and its origin will perhaps never be known for certain. It seems fitting that the term 'social media' has a complicated and international back story (Lodge, 2012).

### MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (American Marketing Association, 2017). Social media is one of the marketing tools which can be used to communicate with members. It is a revolutionary communication tool that has quickly changed the ways in which public relations is practiced. It has become an integral part of corporate communications for many companies (Matthews, n.d). According to Watson et.al (2002), with the popularity of digital marketing on the rise, many businesses are investigating how social media can help them promote their products and services to potential and existing customers.

Rappaport (2011) describes that the use of social networks among large population has created an opportunity for internet business. Due to lower costs more profit can be earned. Companies using social media marketing aim to reduce their need for a sales force. Social media marketing has replaced other outlets that follow traditional marketing and these benefits are attractive to online businesses. At the same time social media faces new challenges and complications in marketing process where a study by Ratnasingam (1998) has shown that fear of online credit card fraud has been one of the major reasons customers have not done more extensive online buying. Hence, trust which is related to security is an important factor in online buying behaviour process.

### PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018), the term 'psychosocial' is involving both psychological and social aspects or relating social conditions to mental health. On the internet, people engage in variety of activities some of which may be potentially addictive. Rather than becoming addicted to social media, some users may develop an addiction to specific activities they carry out online (Griffiths, 2000). Advancements in identity formation and increase in social support achieved through social media use may enhance psychological wellbeing (Vannucci, Flannery & Ohannessian, 2017). However social media use has the potential to function as a source of stress or reinforce negative self- evaluations when individuals engage in negative social comparisons.

Andreassen (2015) reported that people, especially youth use social media in order to reduce their feelings of guilt, anxiety, restlessness, hopelessness and depression and forget about personal problems. If prohibited from social media, typically they become stressed, troubled or irritable and feel bad if they do not engage in social media. Rutledge (2013) explains that for many parents, adjusting to the way that children

use technology means overcoming their own fears. It takes a while for parents and children to figure out new environments, learn new behaviours and to understand the interpersonal and professional implications of social media. It is only by using the tools that we will gain the skills we need to successfully navigate a digital world.

### EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Education today has made access to online system or e-learning in educational institutions in order to utilise electronic technologies to access educational curriculum inside the classroom. Orlanda - Ventayan and Vanteyan (2017) explains the importance of social media in e-learning which helps students to motivate their learning. It also contributes to prepare the study materials for the students which further lead them to create new ideas in learning through their practice of collaboration. Major factors that facilitate the usage of social networking sites in e-learning were identified as collaboration, communication, resource sharing, social influence, usefulness and ease of use (Xi, Ganeshan and Xu, 2012).

Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) established that students' use of social media in extracurricular activities was found to be distractive to learning. Students were less willing to accept social media as a formal learning tool where it has been used largely for socialising and non-academic purposes.

### GENERATION GAP PERSPECTIVE

Generation gap is a lack of communication which leads to misunderstanding and disharmony. It refers to the gap between young and old. Youth is full of passion and risk friendly while the old ones have wisdom and experience. To bridge the gap between the older and younger generations, a healthy level communication is essential (Sukhabodhananda, 2012).

Niemer (2012) explains that electronic connections today seems like a mystery to many parents and grandparents whose children and grandchildren are continuously connected to music players, video games, computers and other electronic devices. When today's teenage children take an apple to school, it is more likely a cell phone than a fruit. Many "iGeneration" adolescents have become keen on computers and social media than their parents. This technological divide has created a new generation gap.

The four steps of generation to solve the generation gap given by Wood (2005) are as follows: First, the younger generation must identify their mistakes and develop their wisdom. Second, the older generation should assume themselves to be the mentor/teacher for the upcoming generations. Third, the younger generation should accept the role of the elder ones as followers where they must be willing to be trainable, flexible, self-motivated, be and able to accept their needs. Lastly, all generations must accept and respect each other's differences as opportunity for self-growth. Hence, the younger generation should learn the norms and values and understand the strong base of the family. The concept of "Humans are social creatures" has to be conveyed strongly to the next generation.

### CONCLUSION

Hence the perspectives of social media shows that the youth face more challenges in this virtual world unless they get addicted to social media which results in a change in their behaviour. The youth often experience poor mental health as a result of the addicted to social media which reflects the growth of the generation gap between elders and themselves. The education in social networking sites has grown widely. Yet the youth divert their attention to somewhere where they lose their self-control. Therefore, social media seen from all these four perspectives is both a challenge and a benefit to the youth who need to decide as to how they will utilise it.

### NOTE:

1. iVillage Inc. is a media company, which operates iVillage.com, Women.com, Lamaze Publishing, the Newborn Channel, iVillage Solutions, and Astrology.com. iVillage.com is a leading women's online

- destination providing practical solutions and everyday support for women 18 and over (Advameg, Inc.,2018).
2. America Online, Inc. is the largest provider of branded information services that are delivered to customers' personal computers (PCs) over phone lines (Advameg, Inc.,2018a).
  3. iGeneration means the generation where the technologies like iPhone, iPad etc., were used mostly by children and teens (Rosen, 2010)

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