

**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USING HABITS OF
YOUTH IN IRAQ**

Dr. Sewa Singh Bajwa*; Mokhalad Ali**

*Professor,
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Ch. Devi Lal University,
Sirsa, INDIA
Email id: nachizbajwa@gmail.co

**Research Scholar,
Baghdad (Iraq)
Email id: makaladaliz@gmail.com

DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2022.00343.4

ABSTRACT

Social media has undoubtedly engulfed the whole world under its gargantuan stature since the turn of the century. It has not only brought about rapid, mind-blowing and unforeseen changes in the modes, means and methods of communication but it has also made the life complicated for industrial media. It won't be an iniquitous to state that Social Media has provided a much needed check on the mainstream media. It has revolutionized the communication patterns across the globe. It is true that it has become a part and parcel of life but its addiction has adversely affected the mental and psychological health of people around the world. Youth is found to be the heavy user of social media. This study aims at learning the social media using habits of youth in Iraq.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Gargantuan, Industrial Media, Psychological Health, Heavy Users, Addiction.*

INTRODUCTION

Media have been exerting a great impact on society since long. Whether in the development or undergrowth of society, role of media cannot be denied. Media has evolved through various phases in different times. Media has grown and established watching different stages of social changes. Role of media in freedom movements during various revolutionary movements and evolution of society should not be under estimated. Role of electronic media in bringing global changes in entire world can never be denied. The process of changes in the structure of media in our country is unprecedented. These changes are due to phenomenal growth in media. Media content and control both have been accessed by common people. News and views is now not only the work of print and electronic media, social media too has taken over.

Social media is the most powerful source of communication in emerging world which besides increasing curiosity is also presenting the real facts to society. Awareness creation is motive of social media. It has covered those aspects of society which have remained untouched by Print and Electronic media so far. It is serving as the best mode of communication to organizations today. It involves the use of social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp etc. are among other broadcasting techniques. Social media provide an ideal environment for interaction where people can meet and share ideas. Facebook is being used by organizations to advertise their services and terms of operation. Websites are being used to post activities and news. Anybody can access the information; Social media have made the world a small village in

terms of its impact on the world of communication. It is a platform for exchanging ideas among people and facilitates the transmission and news. Social media have taken a very important role in our lives. It is making impact on daily life and practical life through exchange of information and access to it. Social media have big changes in the field of communication and transfer of information. Social media forums like blogs, instagram, twitter, facebook etc. have become the most important ways in knowing and transferring the news. Social media has become a reliable source for many media people and institutions. It is playing a key role in identifying public opinion and issues of society where most of the people resort to it to participate and exchange ideas.

Social media is being preferred for its ease of expression, ease of interaction, ease of operation and participation of members of community. Freedom of opinion and expression also break barriers and eliminate cultural differences between communities. It helps to disseminate ideas that aim to raise the consciousness and awareness of people. Social media also help to intensify efforts to educate the community.

Social media is like a relief: people have become accustomed to instant updates. However, there was a lot of talk of being disenchanted with social media. Its addiction has a serious effect on health, but now all these things have been left behind. Many researchers suggest that social media use increases during times of disaster. According to the Cellular Operators Association of India, data consumption has increased by almost 30 percent since the lockdown.

Need and Significance of Study:

The spread of social media in every nook and corner of the world has brought about far reaching changes in living patterns and life style of people. It has grabbed people the lesser developed and underdeveloped countries unawares. Many a times one feels that people were not mentally ready for such drastic and revolutionary changes that social media has caused in communication patterns of society. Societies with strong traditional bonding still find it hard to swallow that social media has usurped personal sphere from the common man. There is found to be scarcity of research on the media habits of people of the middle-east of which Arabian Peninsula is an important part. This study is undertaken with the aim of gauging the impact of social media on living and communication patterns of youth in Iraq and to study their opinion about this media.

Objectives of Study:

1. To study the social media using habits of the youth of Iraq.
2. To study the impact of social media on media habits of youth in Iraq.
3. To study the influence of social media on the communication patterns of youth in Iraq.

Hypotheses:

1. Social media has become an integral part of youth in Iraq.
2. Youth in Iraq is heavy user of social media.
3. Social media has adversely affected the health of youth in Iraq.

Research Methodology:

The study is conducted on the youth of Iraq. For this purpose youth having at least a Bachelor degree is selected for the study. Random sample method and questionnaire technique of data collection has been applied. Online survey was conducted by way of sending Google forms link to respondents. As many as 50 respondents from the city of Baghdad were selected for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis:

The data collected by way of questionnaire has been presented in the form of tables. Adequate analysis is also presented below:

1. Educational Qualification

	Ph.D.	Post Graduation	Graduation	Total
No of Respondents	16	20	14	50
Percentage	32	40	28	100

Table-I

As shown in Table-I majority of the respondents are Post Graduates. There are as many as 32% respondents who have done their doctorate degree. Rest of the 28% respondents have done their graduation in one stream or the other.

2. Favourite Social Media Site

	Facebook	WhatsApp	Instagram	YouTube	Twitter	Total
Respondents	15	08	16	06	05	50
Percentage	30	16	32	12	10	100

Table-II

When asked to name their most favourite social media/ messenger site, as many as 32% respondents stated that Instagram is their favourite social media site/ It is followed by Facebook (30%), WhatsApp (16%), YouTube (12%) and Twitter (10%). Thus, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube are among the most favourite social media sites of youth in Iraq.

3. How much time do you spend on Social Media daily?

	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours	Total
Respondents	11	10	16	13	50
Percentage	22	20	32	26	100

Table-III

It is evident from above table that as many as 32% respondents spend 3-4 hours on social media daily and another 26% respondents remain active on social media for more than 4 hours. The figures are much above the global average of just above 2 hours/day.

4. For how many hours do you need Newspaper daily?

	Less than 30 minutes	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours	Total
Respondents	37	09	2	2	50
Percentage	74	18	4	4	100

Table-IV

Quite fittingly 74% respondents give less than 30 minutes to newspaper reading. Another 18% read newspapers for less than one hour/day. It underlines the amount of importance they attach to social media.

5. How many hours do you watch TV daily?

	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	More than 3 hours	Total
Respondents	31	12	4	3	50
Percentage	62	24	8	6	100

Table-V

TV viewing habits have also taken a nose dive after the arrival of social media. 62% respondents watch TV for less than one hour/day and 24% respondents watch TV for 1-2 hours in a day.

6. Do you think people tell lies on Social Media?

	Absolutely Yes	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	No	Total
Respondents	32	7	6	5	50
Percentage	64	14	12	10	100

Table-VI

A vast majority of respondents think that people tell blatant lies on social media. 64% respondents think that it is absolutely true while another 26% say that people do tell lies on social media.

7. Do you trust people on Social Media?

	No	Yes	Total
Respondents	42	08	50
Percentage	84	16	100

Table-VII

Nobody trusts the liars. As many as 84% youth of Iraq states that it does not trust people on social media. It speaks volumes about the quality of friends on social media.

8. What do you say about quality of your friends made on Social Media?

	Largely Fake	Untrustworthy	Honest	Total
Respondents	30	17	03	50
Percentage	60	34	06	100

Table-VIII

On the lines of the reply to the previous question, as many as 60% respondents say that there are fake friends on social media. It means their friendship is fake. 34% say that their friends on social media are untrustworthy. It means the respondents make friends but they don't trust them.

9. Do you still devote quality time with your childhood friends?

	Sometimes	Yes	No	Total
Respondents	22	21	07	50
Percentage	44	42	14	100

Table-IX

It is widely believed that in the aftermath of social media, people don't give proper time to their friends and family members. But 42% young respondents of Iraq say that they still spare time for their childhood friends. 44% respondents say that they sometimes find time for their childhood friends.

10. Do you give proper time to your family?

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Total
Respondents	33	14	3	50
Percentage	66	28	6	100

Table-X

Much contrary to the established notion in India, 66% respondents of Iraq say that they give proper time to their family members. Just 6% people say that they are unable to spend time with family members.

11. Has Social Media disturbed your routine life?

	Yes	No	Total
Respondents	32	18	50
Percentage	64	36	100

Table-XI

64% respondents say that social media has disturbed their routine life. Meaning thereby is that their living patterns and life style has changed. 36% respondents don't think that social media has changed their routine life.

12. Do you think you have Social Media addiction?

	Yes	No	Total
Respondents	35	18	50
Percentage	70	30	100

Table-XII

70% young respondents of Iraq admit that they have developed addiction of social media. It means that social media has intruded into their lives and they remain busy on social media in routine life.

13. Does Social Media keep you awake till late night?

	Yes	No	Total
Respondents	43	07	50
Percentage	86	14	100

Table-XIII

86% respondents admit that they burn midnight oil for using social media. They awake till wee hours. It means they don't sleep well which is likely to affect their health sooner than later.

14. Has overdose of Social Media affected your health?

	Yes	No	Total
Respondents	32	18	50
Percentage	64	36	100

Table-XIV

As majority of respondents do not sleep even after late night, it is likely to affect their health. 64% respondents say that they have developed one or the other health issue. 36% respondents have been successful in escaping the ill effects of the addiction of social media.

15. Has COVID-19 affected your Social Media using habits?

	Yes	No	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	24	12	14	50
Percentage	48	24	28	100

Table-XV

The response to this question suggests that COVID-19 has not significantly affected social media habits of youth in Iraq. Only 48% respondents think that it has made an influence. 28% respondents are unsure about it.

16. What is your opinion about Social Media?

	It is need of the hour	Wastage of time	Cause of Health issues	All the above	Total
Respondents	25	07	08	10	50
Percentage	50	14	16	20	100

Table-VI

When asked to give their opinion about social media as many as 50% respondents say that it is the need of the hour. While 14% regard it sheer wastage of time, 16% respondents say that it has become a cause of health issues.

CONCLUSIONS:

The above discussion does not leave even an iota of doubt that the youth of Iraq has developed addiction for social media. Majority of them are heavy users of social media and they admit that they do not sleep till late night as they remain busy on social media. The heavy rather over dose of social media has affected their health. Most of the respondents have developed one or the other health issues. It is an established fact that the overdose of social media causes a plethora of physical, mental and psychological ailments. Even then the youth thinks that social media has become indispensable as 50% respondents regard it as the need of the hour.

But, yes, all is not yet lost. There is good news too. It augurs well that a majority of respondents still manage to find time to be with their childhood friends as well as their family members. They believe that people tell blatant lies on social media and that's precisely why they cannot be trusted. This speaks volumes about the dual nature of people for there is huge difference between actual and virtual self. Right from creating fake accounts to posting wrong content and from sharing filtered photographs to making fake videos, a wide range of human activity on social media is untrustworthy. Virtually everything is fake on social media. It underlines the sorry state of human behaviour on social media.

Youth in Iraq feels that access of social media has affected their newspaper reading and TV viewing habits. They have little time for this industrial media. Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube are the most widely favourite social media platforms in Iraq. To sum up, it can be said that the addiction of social media has spread even in Arabian Peninsula and the youth are found to be heavy users of this media.

REFERENCES:

- www.pewresearch.org
- <https://www.treated.com>
- <https://www.forbes.com>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com>
- <https://www.broadbandresearch.net>
- <https://news.mit.edu>

