

A Comparative Study on Friends on Social Network Sites (SNS) and Friends in Reality of Adolescents

Amruta Malatesh Gonal^{1*}, L. Umadevi² and P. Sreedevi³

¹Post Graduate Student, ²Professor, Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies,

³Assistant Professor, Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home Science, Professor Jayashakar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

*Corresponding Author E-mail: amrutagonal00@gmail.com

Received: 2.07.2018 | Revised: 29.08.2018 | Accepted: 6.08.2018

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to know the number of friends an adolescent has in the social network sites and in person. Social network sites have become one of the larger ground for making friends instantly and it also helps for the social development during adolescence and the transition to adulthood. Now a days it's a pride symbol to show the more number of friends in social media than in reality. The study was conducted in Hyderabad and Secunderabad twin cities using ex-post facto research design. The sample consisted of 200 adolescents aged between 18-20 years who were studying professional and Non-professional under graduation. Majority of professional course students have 200-300 friends whereas maximum number of Non-professional course students have more than 500 friends in their SNS sites. There are no significant differences between boys and girls in number of friends they have in the social networking sites. Number of friends the adolescents have in person is very less in comparison to their friends list in social networking sites.

Key words: Social Network sites (SNS), Adolescents, Friends, Professional, Non-professional

INTRODUCTION

Social media are the growingly popular social networks. A social networking service focuses on building and reflecting social networks and relationships and friendship among people who share interests, activities or other similarities. A social networking service essentially poses a virtual representation of a user, called a profile. This profile often

features the user's basic information, such as age, location and sex, as well information regarding one's hobbies, such as favorite movies, musical artists and books. Users are encouraged to connect to one another using a variety of communication tools. These include public profile messages, private e-mail messages, instant messages and gifts.

Cite this article: Gonal, A.M., Umadevi, L. and Sreedevi, P., A Comparative Study on Friends on Social Network Sites (SNS) and Friends in Reality of Adolescents, *Int. J. Pure App. Biosci.* 6(5): 625-630 (2018).
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18782/2320-7051.6978>

Social networking services rely on user participation and user-generated content. Both features not only provide the basis for which these sites may exist, but they enhance the usability and resulting popularity of the service. The most popular social networking services include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Many adolescents begin and end their day by checking SNS posts. Social network sites allow users to make friends and it also suggest the friends by analyzing the interests and mutual friends and work nature. A social network site user can make any unknown or stranger friend on online. Now a days cyber bullying and online cheating cases are on rise. The recent trend of making friends and forming relationship have become online. Real in person friends are less compared with social media friends.

SNS offer adolescents new opportunities as well as new challenges to express to the world who one is. In one-on-one communications within SNS (e.g., “Facebook messages”), adolescents can express their likes and dislikes as well as their worldviews and get immediate feedback. With SNS, adolescents express their views and the recipients of this information include both known as well as unknown targets. Adolescents can make “n” number of known and unknown friends through social network sites. Although there has been variability over time in the specific format of SNS profiles, adolescents have the option of choosing what self-identifying information to provide. Thus, with the advent of these SNS, most adolescents will widely share, with varying degrees of accuracy, honesty, and openness, information that previously would have been private or reserved for selected individuals.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was carried out to know the gender and group of study difference in number of friends in person and in social network sites among adolescents. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the present study. Hyderabad and Secunderabad were purposively selected for conducting the

study. The sample of the study was 200 adolescents between 18-20 years of age group (100 professional and 100 non-professional degree students). The questionnaire was developed specifically for the present study. The data was collected using the questionnaire. The collected data were scored, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted with appropriate statistical procedures.

Social networking teens report that their online friends are people that they have never met in person. One in six or 17% of online teens and 31% of social networking teens have “friends” on their social networking profile who they have personally never met. More than two-thirds (69%) of social networking teens say they do not have unmet friends in their network. Older teen boys (ages 15-17) are much more likely than any other group to say that they have friends in their network who they have never met in person. Nearly half of social network-using older teen boys (47%) have friends in their social network who they have never met. For older girls, only 28% report having people they have never met in their networks. About 1 in 3 (29%) of younger boys report having friends they have never met, and just 22% of younger girls say the same.

Leung⁸ found that female college students seek more socialization gratification through instant messages than relaxation and entertainment. The study revealed that female college students chat through messengers more often and longer per session than male college students.

Results of study by Bölükbaş *et al.*³, indicated that females use Facebook for maintaining existing relationships, academic purposes and following agenda higher than males while males use it for making new relationships at a rate higher than the females. This finding shows that males use social networks mostly for making new friends and relationships while females use it mostly for finding their old friends and keeping in touch with the existing ones. The reasons for this finding could be explained by the possibility that females tend to hide their identities and

personal information to keep their privacy in Internet environment. Research shows that females don't disclose themselves to people they don't really know because of social pressure and traditional social roles associated with women.

Valkenburg *et al.*¹¹, found gender differences in the kinds of information male and female teens misrepresented in online interactions. Boys pretended to be more macho, whereas girls pretended they were older and tried to give the impression of being more beautiful.

Acquisti *et al.*¹, revealed that men and women users of SNS exhibit similarities in sharing information. The veracity of information shared on SNS by college students include providing accurate and complete information about their birthday, schedule of classes, partner's name, aim or political views.

Lenhart and Madden⁷. revealed that Girls and boys differ in how they think about giving out personal information online. Online, girls are more likely than boys to say that they have posted photos both of themselves and of their friends onto their online profile. Boys are more likely to say they

have posted the city or town where they live, their last name and their cell phone number when compared with girls. Girls are more likely than boys to say that they have posted photos both of themselves and of their friends onto their online profile. Boys are more likely to say they have posted the city or town where they live, their last name and their cell phone number when compared with girls.

Caverlee *et al.*⁴, reported that women were more protective of their personal information and more likely to have private profiles. Young women users (teens and 20s) were most prevalent on MySpace, whereas men are most prevalent for all other ages (21 and above).

Thelwall¹⁰, found that males tend to make new relationship in social network environments more than females do.

Barker² study indicated that adolescent girls generally use SNS's to communicate with peers and to reinforce preexisting relationships, while boys more often use the platforms to meet new people and make new friends. Boys are also more likely to identify with groups on social network sites that differ from their offline peers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Details about the number of friends in SNS

N=200

S.No	Number of friends in SNS	P. Adolescents (n=100)				Total		NP. Adolescents (n=100)				Total	
		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		n=100		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		n=100	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	1-100	10	20	3	6	13	13	4	8	5	10	9	9
2	101-200	12	24	12	24	24	24	8	16	10	20	18	18
3	201-300	15	30	18	36	33	33	10	20	11	22	21	21
4	301-400	3	6	5	10	8	8	15	30	8	16	23	23
5	>500	10	20	12	24	22	22	13	26	16	32	29	29

Present study gives information on number of friends in SNS respondents were having. The study reveals that nearly 1/3rd of professional girls student (30%) stated that they had 200-300 friends in their SNS, 24% had 100-200 and interestingly 20% of them had more than 500 and 20 per cent had 100 social networking

friends. The same trend was observed in case of professional course boys, with 36 per cent stating that they had 200-300 friends, 24 per cent of them having more than 500 and another 24 per cent 100-200 friends in their social networking sites.

Interestingly 1/3rd of non-professional girls stated that they had 300-400 friends, 26% more than 500, and very less per cent (8 % and 16 %) had 100 and 200 friends respectively in SNS. It is interesting to note that majority of non-professional boys (29%) had more than 500 friends, 23 per cent 300 to 400 friends and remaining 21 per cent stated that they had 200 to 300 friends in their SNS.

SNS account users set up and maintain a network of online contacts –“friends”. Accumulating large numbers of friends is common practice for some youth⁵. On contrary, European findings from 2010 suggest that half of children aged 9-16 years have fewer than 50 contacts in their preferred SNS, and only one in five had 100-300 contacts. In the same study, considerable country-specific variability was shown, with Greek youngsters reporting the largest network of online contacts and Greek participants claim having more than 300 contacts.

It is interesting to note that 30 per cent of boys pursuing Non-professional courses had more than 500 friends, 23 per cent 300-400 friends and other 21 per cent had 200-300 friends in their social network sites.

Haneefa and Sumitha⁶ who pinpoint that social networking sites enable students to get in touch with their friends, faculty members, and institutions and allow them to connect with more friends; create and share their identities and profiles that may include personal information, pictures, blog entries, videos and music clips; and join groups and communicate with other persons as well.

A study conducted by Hussain *et al.*, to know the usage of SNS by post graduate students of university of Kashmere and found the friendship trends show that 87.06% of students have up to 300 friends, whereas only 12.94% have more than 300 friends. On an average almost 52.74% of the friends on social networking sites are personally known to students, whereas 47.36% of the friends aren't personally known to them. This ratio depicts that students are open for friendships for all people including their physical friends, friends of friends or even strangers with some common interests. The study proves that social networking sites are helpful for connecting people with common interests across physical boundaries.

Table 2: Details about number of fiends in person

N=200

S.No	Number of friends in person	P. Adolescents (n=100)				Total		NP. Adolescents (n=100)				Total	
		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		n=100		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		n=100	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	1-25	26	52	20	40	46	46	33	66	25	50	58	58
2	26-50	15	30	15	30	30	30	4	8	3	6	7	7
3	51-75	5	10	5	10	10	10	7	14	9	18	16	16
4	76-100	3	6	4	8	7	7	5	10	8	16	13	13
5	>100	1	2	6	12	7	7	1	2	5	10	6	6

Study by Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden conducted a study to know the adolescents friendships in social network sites. Teens use social networks for the creation and the maintenance of friendships. Most teens are using the networks to stay in touch with people they already know, either friends that they see a lot (91% of social networking teens have done this) or friends that they rarely see in person (82%).

The study reveals an interesting fact that the number of friends the adolescents have in person is very less in comparison to their friends list in social networking sites. It is evident from the table 2 that 52 per cent of girls pursuing professional course were having 1-25 friends, followed by 30 per cent of them having 25-50 friends and very few (3%) of them were having 75-100 friends in person. In case of Professional course boys, more than

1/3rd of them had 1-25 friends in person and 30 per cent of them were having 25-50 friends and very less (8%) of them had 75-100 friends. It is surprising to note that in non- professional

students, 66 per cent of girls and 58% of boys had 1-25 friends in person and only 2 per cent girls and 10 per cent boys had more than 100 friends in person.

Table 3: Differences in number of friends in SNS based on Group of study

S.No	Number of friends in SNS'S	Professional Course students	Non -professional course students	Chi square	P value
1	1-100	13 (11.0)	9 (11.0)	12.4699	0.014178*
2	101-200	24 (21.0)	18 (21.0)		
3	201-300	33(27.0)	21 (27.0)		
4	301-400	8 (15.50)	23 (15.50)		
5	>500	22 (25.50)	29 (25.50)		

p<0.05

Table 4: Differences in number of friends in SNS based on Gender

S.No	Number of friends in SNS	Girls	Boys	Chi square	P value
1	1-100	14 (11.0)	8 (11.0)	3.3245	0.505053
2	101-200	20 (21.0)	22 (21.0)		
3	201-300	25 (27.0)	29(27.0)		
4	301-400	18 (15.50)	13 (15.50)		
5	>500	23 (25.50)	28 (25.50)		

P<0.05

Differences in number of friends in SNS based on Gender and group of study:

It is noteworthy from the study to know that there is a significant difference between professional and non-professional course pursuing students in number of friends in SNS sites. The study clearly indicates that majority of professional course students have 200-300 friends whereas maximum number of Non-professional course students have more than 500 friends in their SNS sites.

Table 4. Clearly indicates that there are no significant differences between boys and girls in number of friends they have in the social networking sites. It is evident from the table 4.5.8 that equal distribution of genders on number of friends in their social networking sites. It can be concluded that adolescents irrespective of gender have friends in their SNS. But in contrast Mary *et.al*, found in her study that girls and older teens tend to

have substantially larger Facebook friend networks compared with boys and younger teens.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted to know the difference between professional and non-professional adolescent's friendships in social networks and in person. Half of the selected sample had 200-300 friends in SNS sites and other half of the sample have more than 500 friends. Majority of late adolescents selected for present study had around 25 friends in person. A significant difference is found between professional course and non-professional course students in number of friends in SNS, where professional students have 200- 300 friends while non-professional students have more than 500 friends. There is no significant gender difference in number of friends in SNS.

Social networks are attracting youth to make new friendships, to chat, to share and to

express about themselves freely. One can easily form friendships in social networks based on their interests because the profile shows your interests, hobbies, work, study etc. Whereas while making a person in reality takes a longer time to understand and know the person. Social networks sites are making an introvert or the shy person to talk freely with the person without hesitation or shy feeling. At the same time making an unknown person as a friend in social media may lead to many problems like cyber bullying, stalking and cybercrimes. The majority of the adolescents use social networking sites to gain knowledge, to be in touch with family and friends; to share information and promote social, religious, political and environmental awareness and also for the time pass. It is a good sign that adolescents use social networking sites for constructive purposes. However, adolescents need to be made aware about the dark side of social networking sites. The social ethics need to be followed in online environment as well. Youth have more friends in SNS than in reality that is a really a tragedy for present generation. Youth are trying to live in virtual friendships than in the real. Few of the Facebook profiles may be fake and they try to cheat persons in many ways. Now a day's people share everything on social network sites like from the awakening to lying on bed, from bad mood to good moods, from tiredness to relaxation etc. But one should be careful while making the friendships online.

REFERENCES

- Acquisti, A. and Gross, R., Imagined communities: Awareness, information sharing, and privacy on the Facebook. *Privacy Enhancing Technologies*.36–58 (2006).
- Barker, V., Older adolescents' motivations for social network site use: The influence of gender, group identity, and collective self-esteem. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*. **12(2)**: 209–213 (2009).
- Bölükbaş, K. and Yıldız, M. C., İnternet Kullanımında Kadın-Erkek Eşitsizliği. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*.**12**: 103-113 (2005).
- Caverlee, J. and Webb, S., A large-scale study of Myspace: Observations and implications for online social networks. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence. (2008).
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C and Lampe, C., The benefits of Facebook friends Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.**12**: 1143–1168 (2007).
- Haneefa, M. K. and Sumitha E., Perception and Use of Social Networking Sites by the Students of Calicut University, *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, **31(4)**: 295-301 (2011).
- Lenhart, A. and Madden, M., Teens, Privacy and Online Social Networks. How teens manage their online identities and personal information in the age of Myspace. *Pew Internet & American Life Project Report*. (2007).
- Leung, L., College student motives for chatting on ICQ. *New Media & Society*. 3(4):483–500 (2001).
- Manzoor Hussain, Fayaz Ahmad Loan and Gousia yaseen the use of social networking Sites (SNS) by the post-graduate students *International Journal of Digital Library Services* (**1**): 72-84 (2017).
- Thelwall, M., Social Networks, Gender and Friending: An Analysis of Myspace Member Profiles. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*. **59(8)**: 1321-1330 (2008).
- Valkenburg, P.M., Schouten, A.P. and Peter, J., Adolescents' identity experiments on the internet. *New Media and Society*. **7(3)**: 383–402 (2005).