**The effect of personality traits (Big- 5 Factors) on the usage of social media among the College students of North Bengal**

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**Abstract:** We are living in an era of science and technology. Both have received ascendency in almost all the modernized nations of the world. Even in the economically backward countries the longing for science and scientific achievement persists. Scientific and technological achievements have become the measuring rods to assess the economic strength of a nation today. In fact the control of information especially scientific and technical information is a source of prestige and power in all post-industrial societies. Especially in the beginning of the 21st century nations that are doing well in the fields such as computers and super computers, information technology, electronics, biotechnology, telecommunications etc. are normally regarded as the most modern and technologically and scientifically most advanced nations. And so we cannot but confess that we are surrounded by technology and we use in our day to day life all these. Very often not being aware how these media affect us, of course psychologically which is very vivid in one`s behavioral traits we may tend to interpret one`s behavior in different way, and so to make ourselves aware regarding these personality traits and how they may affect an individual`s personality a small study has been conducted.

**Keywords:** Social Media Site; Facebook; Instagram; Openness; Extrovert; Introvert; Agreeableness; Conscientiousness; Neuroticism**;**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Technology and technological developments have reached their heights in the modern society which is often posturized as a technological society. Though technology has assumed important in the present world it is yet to acquire a prominent place in the sociological thinking, though it is not our topic of discussion but may be most relevant as the technology advances fast. In spite of it there are a number of experts who argue for its importance especially in understanding the course of history and social change. Major types of societies such as hunter-gather society, horticultural society, agrarian society, industrial society or post – industrial society are mostly distinguished by differences in technology. Technology has established itself as a powerful agent of social change. The more the society is advanced the more it encourages technology and as a result the more it gets changed due to technology. And the more rapid the technological change the more rapid is the social change that it generates.

1. **THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITE OR SNS**

The social network view unites theories, models and applications that are expressed in terms of relational concepts and processes. According to Borgatti and Foster (2003) the growing interest in social network research; reflects the general shift away from individualist, essentialist and atomistic explanations toward more relational, contextual and systematic understandings. The following theoretical assumptions underpin the network perspective (Kilduff, Tsai and Hanke, 2006; Wasserman and Faust 1994):

* The primacy of social relations assumption that relationships among actors are of fundamental importance
* The ubiquity of social embeddedness actors and their actions are viewed as interdependent rather than independent autonomous units
* The social utility of network connections relational ties between actors are seen as enabling the flow of resources either material or nonmaterial and
* The structural patterning of social life network structure – lasting pattern of relations among actors enables or constrains individual action.

In more pragmatic terms the networks are distinguished depending on the content of the relationships. In particular the literature specifically addresses advice networks, which are aimed at problem resolution, trust networks, in which the information of tactical and political importance is exchanged, communication networks that follow usual job-specific communication patterns (Krachkhard and Hanson, 1993). Recent developments in network analysis shift from static portrayal of social networks to dynamic representation to complex adaptive systems that exhibits both persistence and change (Kilduff et al, 20006). One of the major challenges posed for the network researchers is to explore the dynamic interplay between the psychology of individuals and the complexity of social networks within which they interact (Kilduff et al, 2006)

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1. **THE PERSONALITY TRAITS (BIG FIVE FACTOR)**

Although many conceptualizations of personality exist, due to accumulative empirical evidence the field of personality psychology has witnessed since 1980s a growing acceptation of the Five Factor Model (FFM/Big Five) of personality (Digman, 1990; McCare, 1993) often referred to as Big five. This model argues that there are five universal traits – Openness, Neuroticisms, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness – that encompass all other facets of human personality.

The question is how exactly does personality traits affect behavior has been addressed by integrationists (Epstein, 1979, 1986) who showed that traits could be strong predictors of behavioral trends when behavior is aggregated across different situations. Traits are generally better at predicting cross- situational trends than they are at predicting exactly what a person would do in a single, particular situation. However modern interactionism approach within psychology also attends to the person – environment interaction and accounts for the situational manifestations of the traits. Four basic Postulates (McAdams 2006) underlie integrationist perspective:

* actual behavior is a function of a continuous process of multidirectional interaction or feedback between the individual and the encounter situation.
* individual is an intentional, active agent in this interactional process
* on the personal side of the interaction, cognitive and motivational factors are essential determinants of behavior
* on the situation side the psychological meaning of situations for the individual is important determining factor

The principle of trait activation holds that personality traits are expressed as response to trait relevant situational cues (Tett and Guterman, 2000). Personality is an increasingly popular topic to be explored more and more in the field of psychology. It has been defined variously by different psychologists. Psychologists have used the term personality to be used considerably more than social attractiveness as one would love one`s personality. In fact the definitions by various psychologists on personality not only includes an individual`s characteristic ways of conducting factors as physique, appearance, intelligence, aptitudes and character traits. Recent studies also investigated how the certain personality types might affect the structural position of the individual in the network. Klein et al (2004) looked into the effect of demographic characteristics, values and big five personality traits on the network centrality. In particular they found that individuals that are highly educated and low in neuroticism that is high on emotional stability became high in advice and friendship centrality and low in adversarial. The effect of other personality characteristics on the network structure has also been investigated. So Mehra et al (2001) examined how self- monitoring orientation and network position are related to workplace performance. Additionally Casciaro (1998) investigated how personality traits (need for achievements, need for affiliation, self – monitoring and extraversion) and situational factors (position in the hierarchy, work status and network centrality) affect the ability to accurately assess the social network structure. However none of these studies explicitly addressed the mechanisms of how Big Five personality traits and structural position interact across time and affect once personality. Correspondingly the discussion of personality traits as a nature and the origin of the Big five model and dimensions of personality would provide us with better understanding of personality traits and the effect of it in the usage of social media.

1. **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

**Arshad Muhammad (2015)** conducted a research study on 80 students aged between 18 to 25 in master degree programs selected form G.C University Faisalabad Pakistan to exclusively study the socio-economic situation and their effect on students. The result of this stud indicated that male students have high level of self-esteem and female students have higher academic performance.

**Atyeh Anas Jebreen(2017)** conducted study in Jordan on 380 participants and found out the relationship between big five factors and social media. It was observed that gender, age, college type, expense, experience etc. also moderately affect. It was also found that participant`s uses (Facebook, Instagram) more than addiction level. It was found that men spent more time on social media sites than woman.

**Aydin A. Arsan (2019)** conducted research on 172 participants in Turkey and the major of his research was the spending more time over the social media and less communication as it used to be a few years back as he calls it a traditional way of communication that is face to face interaction. This study attempted to measure the effects of certain personality traits on social media and focused mostly on the effects of extraversion, neuroticism and self- esteem.

**Bliss Khalid (2015)** has found that college students are utilizing social media more than any other generation as his survey illustrates that of 18 to 29 years of age where 84% of the sample reported using Facebook, 44% reported using Google+, 40% reported using Twitter and 36% reported using Instagram. Finally the research found out that the students to whom face to face survey was conducted used social media for various purposes and it was for the betterment of others, a few students used Facebook to campaign against the bad effect of smoking while others created an Instagram posts having the past experience of being addicted to drugs thus campaigning against its bad effects.

**Guo Yu (2015)** conducted study in the 6 main land of china among 2889 participants and found that over 60% participants checked the SNS account several times per day. This found that female users were heavier in comparisons to the male users. Results also found that individual with high neuroticism shows high bonding on social media sites and the person’s with high agreeableness shows the higher effect of the usage of both perceived bonding and perceived social bridging.

**Hwang Ha Sung (2017)** examined study in South Korea and it was noted that around 16 million monthly active users and 74% of the total users fall under the age of 20s and 30s . The study also found that there is tendency to maintain romantic relationship over the SNS sites. There is significant correlations to openness, consciousness and agreeableness, it suggests that the usages of SNS depends mostly on the User`s personality factor such as extrovert and introverts.

**Luke MC Gahely(2019)** conducted study on 81 participant aged between 18 to 67 out of which 33 males and 48 females. It was observed that the individuals have innate desire to be productive and therefore thy think SNS is useless and waste of time. The extroverts are the opposite to introvert, the extroverts are more adventurous, excited in the company of the other people and usually have a positive association in terms of communication. Neuroticism refers to the negative emotions that an individual expresses such as guilt, anger, anxiety and depression, it has been found that individual`s with highly neuroticism tends to be more on the social media in order to meet new people to reduce their loneliness and spent a large amount of time on SNS.

**MucanBurcu (2013)** used consumer survey method and the participants were aged between 18 to 25 years at DikuzEylul University Turkey and found that 65% of the respondents used an instant messaging system between 1 and 5 times a day, 20% used such services between 6 and 10 time a day. The most frequently visited websites were Facebook (444 respondents) and other sites. It also found that there is a positive but weak correlation between extraversion and neuroticism, between conscientiousness and neuroticism and between openness to experience and neuroticism.

**Sullivan O Aoife (2017)** conducted studies in the national college of Ireland and it was found that there is a kind of positive correlations in the usage of social media and the personality traits. The following relationships were noted – platform for highly neurotic individual, neurotics alone wants to complete the task, they try to avoid from being subject to tension or anxiety, agreeableness traits possesses high level of empathy, the extroverts are strong and plentiful connections over the SNS site and also in the real world setting.

**Wang Liang – Jin (2012)** conducted studies on 266 undergraduate students from psychology course at a large university in southern China and found that there is a significant relationship between extraversion and using SNS for communication. Extroverts are fond of expanding and strengthening their social networks. Conscientiousness was not negatively related to SNS use. Similarly agreeableness was found to be positively correlated as they to be found by definition friendly, warm and sympathetic, therefore they should be more likely to post friendly and positive comments to other users status updates and photos. The study also found that the gender issue too was involved in relation to use of social media and it was found that males had more friends over SNS and are more likely to play online games than were the females who were more likely to upload self-photo and update their status.

1. **RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Social networking sites have seen the rapid expansion and growth in popularity since their inception in the early 2000s. Efforts have been made to see how individuals communicate with one another and see themselves, research in psychology tried to gauge this emerging media’s impact. Much of these researches have examined how individuals presents themselves in their web profiles or how one`s personality affects SNSs use. However very little research has explored how SNS directly affect individual`s personality traits and why one wants to use various social media sits with what benefit at personal level and why certain posts, status etc. are shared over the social media, with what intention and individual posts something over the social media, Is it to show their intellectual level or to show their philosophy of life to others over the media or to express their own opinion and view which is rather difficult otherwise?

The self-one presents in the profile are socially desirable and not something unrealistic and this is what one wished to represent. It is also true that the self tends to be selective and carefully managed but not false. This behavior had ramifications for identity exploration especially among adolescents and young adults who are the biggest users of SNSs and most likely to be undergoing identity formation. Now the further may be arisen if the past researches suggest that SNSs shape identity then what kind of specific aspects of identity are shaped? Is it really possible that through SNSs one can develop certain traits and self-views among young adults?

1. **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE KEY TERMS**

The research is totally based on the finding the gain, profit or the benefit after using the social media sites and not to exclusively find out the individual`s personality traits and so we will be mostly dealing with the terms like:

1. **Social Media:** The use of gadgets particularly smart or cell phone through which an individual uses different kind of platforms in order to connect oneself with other over the internet in a virtual social kind of environment.
2. **Facebook:** The social media platform Facebook permits users with a means of self- presentation thorough an online profile; users accumulate friends who post comments on their pages and their uploaded photographs.
3. **Instagram:** It is a contemporary form of social media. The site allows users to easily share their daily activities by taking photos an editing them using the various filters the application has on offer. Users have the option to add caption, hash tags using the # symbol to provide a description of their upload and mention other users using the @ symbol which introduces a link from their profile to the mentioned users’ profile.
4. **Openness:** An individual is said to be open when he or she behaves in a particular manner which is different from that of others over the media or in a real life which gives the feeling of socialness to the others. Individual who scores high on the trait of openness tend to be intellectually curious, and they report enjoying artistic pursuits (Ross, 2009)
5. **Extrovert:** When an individual goes out of his or her to connect oneself with others and thus expresses oneself outwardly in behavior and action is termed as extrovert. Highly extrovert people gravitate towards simulating environments and are more gregarious in their thought and behaviors (Swickert, 2002)
6. **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness is often identified as competence, achievement, self-discipline, dutifulness and orderliness (Butt and Philips, 2008). The term conscientiousness includes an individual`s inclination to obey socially prescribed norms and rules (Bogg, 2013).
7. **Neuroticism:** The personality trait of neuroticism encompasses an individuals’ emotional stability, neurotic people are more liable to experiencing negative emotions, including anger, shame and embarrassment (Haslam, 2007). High scoring neurotic individuals can be aggressive, tense, volatile, impulsive and restless holding the tendency to experience anxiety, compared to the typically calm, relaxed personalities of those whom are emotionally stable (Chemorro-Premuzic, 2013).
8. **Agreeableness:** It primarily specifics the interpersonal qualities and social adaptability of an individual, connecting cooperativeness, warmth, kindness, affection and helpful characteristics held within a person with their interactions with others (Moore, 2012).

**6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To find the purpose of using social media i.e. to trace benefits one gains after using social media sites
2. To find the motif behind certain kind of posts and the personality traits that reinforces them.

1. **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The methodology for the research will be qualitative descriptive method. The study conducted will be using the qualitative descriptive methodology as to make it non-statistical or qualitative and the graphical diagram will be made use in order to describe the data as the percentage will be taken out using the normal mathematical method of finding the percentage. Data were collected from the respondents by way of sharing the Microsoft form link. Questionnaires were utilized to gather relevant information for the current study. The questionnaires were considered more practical due to time restrictions thus allowing results to be collected from the participants. The qualitative design permitted the investigation to find out the usage of social media, the effect of personality traits on using the social media sites and the research objectives. Individual scores on each of the 5 proposed personality traits were measured using the Big five questionnaire (Goldberg, 1981) which consists of 50 statements. Participants were instructed to indicate the extent to which they identified with each of the statements outlined on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(DISAGREE) to 5 (AGREE).

1. **Sample:** The total population will be 107 consisting of boys and girls and data will be collected through random questionnaire. The area for collecting the data will be the college students specifically Salesian College Siliguri Campus. The data were collected by sending the link of Microsoft form.
2. **The Tools:** For the measurement of the personality trait, we will be using standardized test developed by Goldberg and for the measurement of the usage of social media the too which will be used developed by survey monkey online testing popular platform. Survey Monkey is cloud based tool that helps create, send and analyze. Survey Monkey online survey software that helps one to create and run professional online surveys. It is very powerful and a well-known online application.
3. **Procedure:** The area of the study is mostly based on college students of North Bengal. The study is conducted not to compare who possesses what type of personality traits rather the traits will be made use to see the use of social media sites or how long one is using social media or the gender comparison rather to find out the gain, the type of achievement or the purpose one obtains by using the various social media platforms. It is true that the study is not exclusively going to find out the personality traits one possesses but to say that due to a particular trait an individual uses the social media in a way that is appropriate to oneself.
4. **RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

As many researches have been conducted earlier by various experts regarding the uses of media and the time spent over the media and so the topic is not an entirely new concept rather a thirst that led to choose this topic was to find out the motif why an individual uses social media and how that justifies the personality traits and from the data collected, we can present the result as descriptive analyses as follows:

**Table 1: Pie chart to describe the percentage of personality traits**

 **Fig 1: Diagram displaying the percentage of individuals –identified their personality traits.**

1. The reason to use social media – as the data collected it shows that many (56%) said that they use social media to be connected with others and most of them are said to be extroverts though there are other personality traits related while others said that they increase in self-esteem (45%) when they gain friends and the percentage of these categories are as follows:
2. 71% that is as many as 77 of them said they used social media to be connected whereas 28% that is as many as 30 of them have said they use social media to have better social identity. However, they have also expressed other reasons to use social media and they are as follows: To gain more friends helps gaining high self-esteem 56%, To showcase one`s talent 40%, To be liked over the SNS 39%, Intellectual discussion 4%, To promote oneself 45%.

The above results shows that a huge portion of the individuals use social media to promote oneself and ready to go beyond in order to achieve friends, are mostly the individuals who possesses the traits neuroticism, they also revealed that they spent most of the time over the social media and are comfortable over the social media than the real life experiences, and this is to say that they want to show to the world how beautiful or handsome he/she is, the talent one possesses, the kind of life one lives in real life and often modified or overly shown over the social media is an important factor that leads to use the SNS platform to remove a temporary aloofness. The individuals possessing the traits agreeableness are more open and active in social media as well as in real life too. So, from the above findings it is clearly seen that the usage of social media certainly affected by personality traits land one cannot deny it as it is clearly said the degree to which one uses and affected by the personality traits differs.

1. **POSITIVE IMPLICATION**

We may discuss the educational implications of personality traits as it affects the usage of social media. The implications are as follows:

1. **Development of social factors, individual thought and behavior, and social skill:** As the usage of social media increases there is tendency to find out every material over the media or the internet and this very often helps students to increase their psychological ability as they come across new concept or ideas over the various social media sites.
2. **New ways to engage in teaching – learning situation:** Researchers have found that the technology based education system is more effective than the traditional way of teaching learning. And so it is said that there is a positive attitude towards the use of social media in the classroom situation in order to gain greater attention and facilitate better teaching and learning keeping in mind the need of the students**.**
3. **Online educational community:** Social media is not a new concept it existed for many years if not 100 years but concept of creating an educational community over the social media may be a new concept as we have seen this in recent year as the pandemic hit the traditional system of teaching and learning.
4. **Increases the participation in social discussion:** Students now very often participate ovet the media by way of sharing their content in social discussion. The agreement and disagreement regarding the social issues are put forth over the social media.
5. **Knowledge Sharing:** Hansen et al (2017) defined social media as a set of online application and tools that provide ways of social interaction and communication between digital media users by facilitating and creating knowledge sharing and ultimately transforming a monologue into a dialog for instance by an organization to customers. According to various prior studies social media includes diversified internet based tools and applications based on a particular philosophical ideology and technological foundations and functionality, social media has changed its user`s communicate and utilize internet based sites as a means of dispersing content among digital media and internet users (Abbas, 2019).
6. **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to first of all in the Salesian College Siliguri campus only. If we talk about the area or demographical situation it is actually too small area to study on this vast topic however it is never a mistake to know a particular institution and their student`s behavior especially when it comes to usage of social media and psychological traits. Secondly the data was collected using the Microsoft form link due to the pandemic situation that gave rise to the need of using the online platform for collecting data, which though preferred but chosen as no other means were available at hand. Thirdly the sharing of the link was easy but the collection of the data was tedious task as there were two links shared (social media usage and personality traits) each containing 24 and 50 questions. Due to the time constraints and the lack of sincerity among the participant in the sense of replying the questionnaire, the sample was reduced to below 120 which otherwise could have been above 120 or so. Due to the lack of the desired number of participants the sample size was reduced to 107 as these many participants or respondent had replied to both the questionnaire.

1. **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The thirst was to find out the gain one aims to achieve after having used the social media site and to certain extent it has been fulfilled however there are always a vast scope to study more and to find out more about many things known and unknown. One could exclusively study about the psychological wellbeing of using social media sites. The topic itself could be researched over and again to justify the use of media and psychological wellbeing as the rise of technology increases during this time of pandemic. The digital wellbeing and the personality traits – the another major topic that needs to be researched over and over again in order to find out the majority of the opinion of the young as well as the adults. Topics related to self-esteem and the personality traits and the usage of social media for the 21st century`s technology based education could be the topic for research.

1. **CONCLUSION**

At the end of the small but detailed study on the topic that arose from the thirst to know more about the individual`s use of social media and how this is being affected by the personality traits, it can be said that the need is never ending as we live in technology-based post contemporary era. It is also true that the terms that are used in the topic are not new and probably be considered as old as the human being existed but studied differently at various stages of human development. But the thirst to know more about anything i.e. human being, material objects, universe etc. are never ending and thus we have the term Re-search which itself gives us the meaning of choosing certain topic to find out more about something or to find out the suitability or the fact about the studied conducted earlier in the researchers own surroundings or environments. Last but not the least the personality traits especially the Big-5 factor is a huge topic to be covered and scope to study on this topic in view of relating other concepts is infinite. The deeper one goes more the newer knowledge is bound to arise and the thirst to know more cannot be bridle. Thus this small study can be done elaborately and exclusively at time of pandemic in order to find out the personality stability and the use of social media sites.

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