Social Media Interactivity in Pakistan: A study from Metropolitan City

Safa Ilyas Ahmed [a], [*], Anjum Zia [a]

[a] Lahore College for Women University, Pakistan

Abstract

In this study the social media interactivity among digital natives and digital immigrants in Lahore has been evaluated. The primary goal of this research is to determine whether they are participating in social media interactivity or not. In continuation to this their social media interaction patterns have been highlighted. The interview of total 16 participants were carried out. These participants belong to a variety of communities including students, academics, psychologists, sociologists, and housewives. They are chosen based on their interest in and frequency of social media interactions. Data was collected through a semi structured interview and examined using thematic analysis. The results revealed that the digital natives and digital immigrants both spend a significant time of their daily lives interacting with social media. Both natives and immigrants have comparable intentions of staying connected, following recent trends on social media and interacting with friends and family. These research threads address high-profile problems and debates surrounding both groups' involvement in social media interactivity, and they provide fertile ground for future research.

Keywords: social media interactivity, digital natives, digital immigrants, interaction patterns, trends, socialize.

1. Introduction

The emerging trend of social media usage is not only to spread the news and information but also to let the people connected with their near and dear ones. Previous studies examine how digital natives use social media at various phases of life, but the researchers in this study looked at both to see if age, gender, and digital expertise have an impact on how people use social media. It has been noted that people interact online with each other in order to permanently remain connected with their friends and families. This interest of connection is emerging as an addiction to social media in this era (Ahmed, Khalid, 2014). Khoo (Khoo, Yang, 2020) discovered that using social media for interactions with social networks is just as helpful for boosting middle-aged and older persons' perceptions of social support as being connected with family in real times.

Interaction patterns have now turned from a single-way connection to a shared world Fosters multilateral interactivity that is transforming contemporary communication. Social media forms such as Blogger, Wikipediand My space to the social media sites that dominates today media sphere which are *Facebook, Twitter,* and *Instagram* (VanDijck, 2013). Uses-and-gratifications scholars for studying new media, likewise Internet users have created a list of gratifications remarkably like those collected from older media. Therefore, the notion that media technology will influence user needs, creating new and distinctive gratifications (Sundar, Limperos, 2013). Gratifications are defined as satisfactions, which occur when a person's

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: safailyas86@gmail.com (S.I. Ahmed)

requirements are met by certain media sources that meet their expectations (Katz et al., 1974). According to one study (Downs, Javidi, 1990), the interpersonal communication motives in the lives of older adults are due to loneliness, escape, pleasure and inclusion. The messages have impact on receivers are passive and reactive, focuses on changes in thoughts, attitudes and behaviors which assumes a direct influence on users (Rubin, 2009). To investigate the emerging trend of using social networking sites among earlier scholars, researchers conducted in-depth interviews in order to identify the reasons behind using social presence and not using privacy measures on *Facebook* (Jung et al., 2017).

In this study, researchers are exploring the social media interactivity among digital natives and digital immigrants in Lahore, Pakistan. A digital immigrant is someone who was born before the widespread use of personal computers and the Internet made digital communication ubiquitous whereas A digital native is someone who grew up with digital technology and is comfortable with it (Prensky, 2001). In-depth interviews have been conducted from 8 digital natives and 8 digital immigrants for understanding the interaction patterns of both groups. Kirk (Kirk et al., 2012) stated that with the advent of new technology as social media, academic researchers, as well as marketing professionals are continually looking for a better understanding of how information is generated and consumed, the relationship between interactivity, consumer satisfaction and intentions to adopt. Nonetheless, user age affects gratification with interactivity. The older "digital immigrant" users are highly contented with static e-books and younger "digital native" are more satisfied with interactive sites.

The uses of tablet computers and its differential gratifications for information seeking, relationship maintenance, enjoyment and for spending time online. The study explores that social media usage is least among earlier adults and higher among Boomers and GenY (Magsamen-Conrad, 2015). The focus of this study, is to evaluate both groups together. The focus should not be only on digital natives, who are young technology users and were born in the digital age, but also on digital immigrants who were not born in the digital age and still intensely use social media. Online survey with former adults aged 60 years or older according to *Facebook* profiles indicates that personal status updating is associated with community-building and interaction gratification (Jung, Sundar, 2018). Recent research suggests that users' social media preferences vary depending on their individual interests and motivations and these aspects can contribute towards problematic social media usag in a minority of users (Kircaburun et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was to investigate the patterns of social media interactivity among digital natives and digital immigrants in Lahore, Pakistan. Because of its accessibility and variety of options, using social media sites has become one of the most popular social behaviours. According to recent data, social media sites are used by more than two-thirds of internet users and about one-third of the world's population (Kemp, 2017).

Social media usage and gratifications differ depending on user factors such as age, gender and personality. The use of social media might also vary depending on the type of social media sites being used. Facebook, for example, can be used to fulfil the need of belonging as well as for self-presentation (Nadkarni, Hofmann, 2012). This study's integrated view of the existing literature can assist future researchers to avoid duplication while also providing fruitful avenues of inquiry in order to help and influence research in this growing topic related to immense usage of social media among different age groups. Usage and gratification are applied as theoretical implications for this study. This viewpoint implies that people have inherent desires that may be met by social media. To this day, scholarly study on social media gratifications is guided by U&G's original 1970s approach. We no longer refer to Internet audiences as "audiences" since they are so active. Instead, we refer to them as "users," as per the letter and spirit of the U&G paradigm. Some capabilities are more frequent in specific media, such as newspaper interactivity being lower than in computer-based media due to the form of letters to the editor and other feedback methods (Rafaeli, 1988). With the support of literature, the aim of this study is to explore the social media interactivity patterns among digital natives and digital immigrants to look at both groups to see if age, gender, and digital expertise have an impact on how people use social media in Lahore, Pakistan.

The specific objective is to explore the social media interactivity patterns of digital natives and digital immigrants' in a metropolitan city of Pakistan.

2. Materials and methods

The concept of an active audience, first proposed by early uses-and-gratifications (U&G) researchers to capture the purposiveness and attentiveness in media consumption and contrast it with the general assumption of a "passive audience" among media effects scholars (Rubin, 2009) has steadily moved from assumption to obvious reality. With the advent of user-generated content (UGC) interfaces and applications, these affordances are increasingly allowing Internet users to not only view media in new ways, but also actively contribute their own content. The medium's technology is a major contributor to the shifting nature of user gratifications. According to T.E. Ruggiero (Ruggiero, 2000) explains technological features (e.g., interactivity, demassification, and synchronicity) will be crucial for future U&G research since they will give researchers with a variety of different behaviors to investigate. Quantitative researchers use a few variables and many cases, whereas qualitative researchers use a few cases and many variables, according to (Thelwall, 2021). For greater objectives, qualitative and quantitative methods have been suggested in media studies. Direct observation in natural settings is used to obtain data in qualitative research. Individual data is anonymously and impersonally reviewed. Qualitative research adds depth to meaning by respecting the individuality of each subject and necessitating a researcher's interpretation (Tonaka, 2015).

Thematic research usually starts with verbal interview or focus group data or textual newspaper data. Open-ended responses to questionnaire items, diaries, video material, photographs, and essays, on the other hand, can all be analyzed thematically. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used to acquire interview data (Tonaka,2015). Lahore has selected to conduct this study. All the participants of this study belong to Lahore. Demographic details of participants are given in appendixes. All digital natives and digital immigrants were selected on their social media usage frequency and interest in social media interactivity. To analyses the data gathered during the 16 interviews, such themes were identified in data: connectivity, curiosity, fun, sharing content, express feelings, and follow trends. Thematic analysis will be discussed the current study aim to identify the social media interactivity in a metropolitan city of Pakistan. Thematic Analysis (TA) is a simple, adaptable, and increasingly popular method for analyzing qualitative data. Learning to do it gives a qualitative researcher a solid basis in the fundamental abilities needed to engage in various qualitative data analysis approaches (Braun, Clarke, 2012). In addition, for data collection and analysis, the researchers used NVIVO 12-Plus, software designed for qualitative research investigations.

3. Discussion

Since the late 2000s, when social media became popular, there has been an upsurge in research examining SNS usage from diverse academic perspectives. Since 2004, Facebook's popularity among SNSs has grown, particularly as a worldwide and social phenomenon (Fidan et al., 2021). Many popular websites and apps have social networking capabilities that allow users to engage, build social connections, make updates, share material, and leave comments on other people's posts. *Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube,* and *Google* are the most prominent and well-known social media sites in the Western world (Alexa, 2017). Why are social networking sites such a hot topic in so many fields? Is it true that combining data from different fields improves insight and understanding? Media studies is one of the academic areas that uses a variety of methodologies. The goal of this research is to present a multifaceted perspective and to investigate generational disparities as well as other aspects based on social media interactivity and personal qualities. As the above debate shows, social networks might be classified differently in key online communities (e.g., *Google*), as well as differently than users expect. Given the variety of capabilities available on established platforms today, users may classify social media under a variety of areas (Rhee et al., 2021). Most social media studies focus on how young individuals, particularly college students, use social networking sites. While various studies have investigated how Facebook can help older adults feel less lonely, the motivations for use other social media sites, such as Instagram, have not been thoroughly investigated (Sheldon et al., 2021). The entire use of social media via applications and sites, in which users communicate freely with writing, chatting, and sharing photographs and stories, was operationalized in this study as social media interactivity.

The most popular and most-visited SMS is Facebook. Online social networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* use social networking aspects, but they are not the only ones. News reading,

online education, music listening, book reading, diet and weight loss, and physical activity are just a few examples (Althoff et al., 2017). Users can build a profile on any social site over the internet and have access to a list of users with whom they want to interact using Social Media Networks. Any user can view and explore their own list of connections, as well as those made by others within the system (Nasir et al., 2012). It has been shown that social networking sites improve offline relationships. According to many academics, *Facebook* is utilized to consolidate existing offline user ties. Social media refers to websites that enable the formation of relationships between users of various backgrounds, resulting in a complex social structure. Inquiry and decision-making are aided by user-generated content (Kapoor et al., 2018). Another study looks at how users in the United States characterize the fundamental purpose of major platforms (*Facebook, Twitter*, and *Instagram*), as well as how such definitions connect to important outcomes previously related with social media use.

Overall, the findings shown that classifying platforms as social interaction is linked to increased social affordances and resources (Rhee et al., 2021). In addition, many studies have investigated the viability of online communities/social media as a marketing medium, while others have investigated various aspects of social media, such as the risks associated with its use, the value it creates, and the negative stigma associated with it in the workplace. Another study uses mind maps to explore the perceptions of Instagram as a social networking site, with the goal of better understanding this social phenomenon that affects them due to its use motives and features.

Thematic analysis was used to resolve qualitative data. The four categories were revealed are Communication and interaction, knowledge acquisition, entertainment and sharing, and negative consequences of Instagram (Fidan et al.,2021). Prior research has looked on the usage of social media for information sharing during crucial events, as well as for seeking and/or rendering assistance. Other contexts include politics and government, as well as a contrast of traditional and social media. Overall, this research uncovers several new themes in the existing corpus, adding to our knowledge of recent developments in social media interactivity. Many studies focus on the social media usage of digital natives now not only the digital native who we considered to perfect users of technology those who born in technology others who are digital immigrant older adults not born in technology but effectively use social media and this study are going to identify how much digital natives and digital immigrants are involved in social media interactivity in Lahore, Pakistan. Social media platforms have enabled the Internet to expand from a one-way communication tool to a virtual environment that supports social media interactivity, which has had a transformational impact on modern communication since their introduction nearly two decades ago. Expectations for the level and quality of communication between individuals and groups have evolved from the earliest forms of social media such as Blogger, Wikipedia, and Myspace to the social media platforms that currently dominate the social media sphere are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Van Dijck, 2013).

Data Analysis and Findings Computer-Assisted Analysis Social media interactivity patterns: The researchers have examined the data using NVIVO 12-Plus at this point and have come up with some significant conclusions. Figure 1 depicts the statement's overall word cloud, from which we can determine how interviewees interpret social media interactivity. In addition, by using NVIVO 12 Plus, the social media usage pattern is identified.

Fig. 1. The Statement's most commonly used terms

In the above-mentioned Figure 1, which clearly shows that digital natives and digital immigrants like to interact with social media consider it trend wanted to stay connected with friends and family. In most prominent terms showing all positive and negative experiences of digital natives and digital immigrants that can be creating impact on many further aspects of life

like, behavior, values relationship and cultural grounds. Figure 2 also demonstrates how these commonly used words form a Tree-Map, which shows the relationship between the words and them collocates. It also emphasizes the hierarchical nature of certain terminologies and their societal implications.
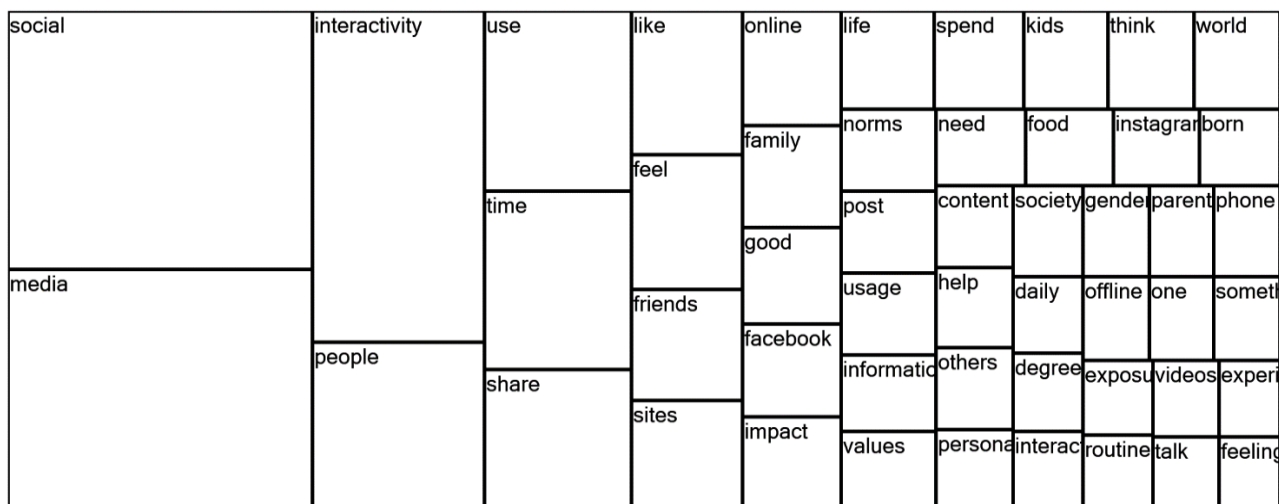

Fig. 2. Tree-map showing the Statement's frequently used keywords.

Thematic Analysis of Social Media Interactivity Patterns

The interviewees come from many walks of life they were students, Academicians, psychologist, sociologist and house wife etc. Generally, participant interact through *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter* and *YouTube* some of them mentioned *WhatsApp* for texting and sharing freely with their personal contacts. *Facebook* owing *Instagram* and *WhatsApp*. They all having interactive features to text to share story and status. Digital natives use Instagram more frequently these days.

"Instagram is probably one of my favorite social networking apps because it is so dynamic and user-friendly. I can quickly share the content I enjoy, such as my videos and photos, or write on a subject." Now Instagram has also introduced a feature of memories which brings the bar even higher as users can cherish the moments of their lifetime. Another digital native enjoys Instagram's features *"I like to interact through Instagram that help me a lot to socialize and enhance my food blogging interest. I express my feelings through writing a blog.* Blogging is a new healthy trend among individuals; they write about their own interests to participate in societal debates. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, are more interactive through *Facebook* and *YouTube* *"I enjoy interacting with people on Facebook; I have nearly 5000 friends and 2000 followers, and I can quickly share posts about my Eilaf club; I didn't have the option to communicate with such a large number of people before social media."*

These apps make it easier for users to share information, but other traditional options, according to the digital immigrant, cost a lot of money. So, let others know about their lectures, they'll just make a note on *Facebook*, and then upload it to *YouTube*. That's how they target large number of audiences with zero cost of it. In this aspect, *Facebook, Instagram,* and *YouTube* also facilitate people in creating a small business opportunity and providing any online services. Many people nowadays make money from *YouTube* channels. Users can now easily create a small business by posting photographs or videos of their products, communicating with consumers, and completing transactions.

As a result, Instagram serves as a central hub for all marketers to connect with their target audiences and offer a hassle-free online buying experience *"It is now easy for the social media users to start a small business as you can post pictures of your product or videos and communicate with the customers and get the deals done."* According to current analysis only few of interviewees use Twitter who have some intellectual insights regarding current affairs and interest in politics *"My main interest is Geo Politics and its implications strategically. For this purpose, Twitter is my main source of getting news and updates from around the world. Other*

than that, I use Facebook for a mix of entertainment and current affairs." Both digital natives and immigrants regard Twitter as a source of good news and current affairs, whereas Facebook is more focused on enjoyment.

Digital natives and digital immigrants are more excited for connectivity in the early stages of social media usage. Many social media sites and apps allow numerous options to communicate with people in an unrestricted manner. Social media make users able to connect with old classmates, colleagues and friends. They use social media to keep in touch with friends and family that live far away. As one interviewee give an interesting answer, *"I remember when I newly joined the world of Facebook, I have sent the message to my favorite singer SonuNigham, at that time. I felt that I can connect to everyone though* "most of the interviewees feel comfortable to interact with old friends and colleagues on *Facebook* because they believe *Facebook* is simple to use and that they can quickly find their friends there. Almost all interviewees begin interacting through social media out of curiosity to learn more about this new virtual world, while others use it for fun to check out other people's profiles and how they post information on social media sites *"I began using social media in 2005, at the time, my sole motivation was to learn about something new and see how people were having fun on these sites."* When it comes to interviewee 4, she explains, *"I had no idea how to use the many features of Instagram, but it was a fantasy world for me. I created a profile in* 2013 *just for fun because all of my friends were doing it, so I did as well."* This is something so challenging in social media that it creates a fantasy world for users and shows only a glittering side of picture.

Users can become so engrossed in social media that they lose track of time, browsing and spending hours on it. Digital natives spend an average of 5 to 7 hours on social media per day, whereas digital immigrants spend an average of 3 to 4 hours per day on social media. *"I use YouTube to watch entertaining and educational videos (I mostly use it while having my meals). Even if it isn't my favorite cuisine, I can easily get through it by viewing videos while eating. So, even something as simple as my meals, which is a part of my daily routine, is influenced by my use of social media."* Digital natives are usually aware of their usage patterns that have an impact on their lifestyle, but they are unable to change them because social media interaction is somehow become their lifestyle.

They are content with this and strive to avoid all the activities that disrupt their daily routine. Whereas one of the participants from digital immigrant also talk about the time he spends on social media on daily basis *"I believe that I spend a lot of time on social media, and it's become a habit for me to try to make new friends through social media sites rather than meeting people in person my friends annoyed with me in this regard that I am not giving them time."* On social media sites, interviewees have their own moods and expressions to communicate their emotions. *"Emojis are a great way to express feelings on social media and I use them quite often".* Digital natives are more into the fun side of things, and they even express their anger by posting various status updates to openly express their feelings. *Usually, I express my feelings with pictures and videos".* Digital immigrants, on the other hand, are careful to freely express their emotions on social media platforms. They usually like the idea of being able to offer something that reflects their individuality *"I love to share content related nature, I found the world is full of wonders, I should explore the beautiful post of sceneries of natural resources and then share with fellow friends".* Most of their content, among other things, is based on information, education, and inspirational quotes. Another digital immigrant usually posts on religious knowledge. *"I prefer pages and content that are based on Islam; I've come across some doubtful content as well, but I still find myself attracted to incidents that are based on someone's faith; I exclusively post religious quotes and stories".*

The freedom of expression offered by social media interactions drew users; the medium is so wide and broad that it allows users to speak freely and explore the world according to their own preferences *"I always feel excited and think that this site would must have something new for me and something entertaining".* The basic purpose of using social media of both digital natives and immigrant must keep up with what is going on in the world, and it was also trendy. It makes them feel good and provides them some gratification, and it is a fun way to pass the time. Both digital natives and digital immigrants occasionally browse for no reason other than to pass the time, and this is how they spend most of the time on social media sites *"When I'm sitting alone and exhausted from my job and domestic tasks, and my children are occupied with their homework, so I feel free socialize. I sometimes feel bad for wasting so much time on social media, but I also feel relaxed".*

Some interviewee claims that they use social media because they see it as a trend, and that if they don't check their status and share their thoughts on current events, they feel lost and undesired, as if no one knows who they are. Digital natives are more concerned with their social identity on social media *"Fear of missing out (FOMO) is another thing that keeps me returning to social media repeatedly. Even though there are very few things that can't need an immediate response, FOMO will have me believing otherwise. Perhaps I'm worried that I'll be left out of the conversation at University if I miss the latest news or gossip on social media."* It is detected that digital natives are so concerned about displaying their presence on social media is an intriguing observation. They feel out of touch if they do not update their information on their profiles via status and stories on a regular basis. Social media interactivity creates that urge among users to stay online and active in the virtual world. Some digital immigrants also believed that social media interaction is an opportunity to understand about others, and that by showing their presence on social media, they are aware of current societal debates and trends. Users are more conscious of society now, and they want to voice their opinions on current issues and social media trends via hashtags. With the use of hashtags, Instagram can promote and attract many audiences corresponding *"hashtags which were initially introduced by twitter to set a trend for any cause but now Instagram has taken over as it let you share videos of quite a good length, you can edit and add music of your choice".* Digital natives utilize hashtags on Instagram and *Twitter* to communicate their feelings, whereas digital immigrants still choose to chat about the subject on *Twitter.* As one of the interviewees expresses his feelings regarding social media that *"These sites control our minds. It's an ocean, internet attract you the way someone tries to catch fish, so it gives us such a variety that we don't understand how to avoid the intoxication.* "Although this is a trend for users that they are using social media because everyone is using and somehow available on social media that's why age and gender is not matter anymore in usage patterns of social media.

4. Results

This study focuses on older generations' use of *Facebook* and *Instagram* to bridge the gap. Social media have allowed this since its beginning nearly two decades ago the Internet emerge. Previous study has highlighted the contrast between digital natives and digital immigrants when it comes to how they understand and interact with social technology for work (Jarrahi, Eshraghi, 2019). In this study researchers examine the involvement of digital natives and digital immigrants that how much they are active in social media interactions, their reasons and usage according to their age and expertise towards new technology. *Facebook* and *Instagram* are used by older individuals to make up for a lack of social activity and face-to-face encounters in their daily life (Sheldon et al., 2021). Popular discourse illustrates that social media generates radical effects on users (Elgot, 2015). Social media is a powerful communication tool to share information within a second in the world. The literature emphasizes that social media is a content created by a customized user that gives users complete control over their use of content creation and manipulation (Dickey, Lewis, 2012). Traditional mass media and social media are fundamentally different. Traditional media services are focused on the one-to-many relationship, whereas social media uses a many-to-many relationship with a passive audience (Allcott et al., 2020). Fioravanti (Fioravanti et al., 2021) identify an increasing corpus of research has investigated the effects of social networking site problematic use on the fear of missing out (FOMO) and (PSNSU). The relationships were not moderated by the samples' age, gender, or geographic location. Now people have awareness they want to know about the society, want to share their views. *Twitter, Instagram,* and *Snapchat* did not make social interaction their primary focus. Above and beyond social interaction networks, researchers found that *Twitter* was perceived more as a news or entertainment platform, whilst *Instagram* and *Snapchat* were viewed more as photo/video and entertainment platforms (Rhee et al., 2021). Chen (Chen, 2011) discovered that *Twitter* use satisfies the demand for a sense of unity and connection amongst individuals by acting as a channel for interaction and giving individuals with the option to connect with others. Women and men were equally likely to have accounts on a friend-networking site when the characteristics of users were examined. Theirs, on the other hand, in some cases, the benefits and gratifications for doing so differed (Raacke, Bonds-Raacke, 2008). A new phenomenon is observed during interviews that digital natives and digital immigrants both are making funny videos on TikTok to getting likes and entertain their selves watching videos on TikTok, further these videos also share on other networks for fame and satisfaction. TikTok separates out from other social media applications because of its

strong user engagement has now surpassed Facebook as the app with the greatest monthly use in minutes in only a short period of time (Scherr, Wang, 2021). During the interviews, it became evident that many users, particularly digital natives, used social media frequently without any proactive aim, while feeling guilty about it. In contrast, according to the last quote from one of the digital immigrants, guilt had no impact on the amount of time spent. There should be no guilt if the user's motive for using social media is clear and relevant.

5. Conclusion

In the conclusion of this analysis digital natives and digital immigrants both are using social media freely according to their choices and needs, this was the biggest concern users know they spoil their daily routine activities, their eating and sleep patterns are also affected with immense usage of social media at late nights. Researchers started by asking whether users still consider major social networks to be places for social interaction, given their ever-changing range of features and functions. This research discloses two major constructive conclusions: 1) Our research confirms that there is no single solution to this question, and no single platform that embodies "social interaction". 2) Finding also reveals that both generations, whether they belong to digital native or digital immigrant are on same urge to socialize to explore and entertain their own self. Rather, the results of this study show how individual users' preferences fluctuate depending on which social media networks they use. Some of the digital immigrants also like to show off about their belongings like digital natives and some use to oppose it and believe in our culture we help people not to let them feel frustrated about what they don't have. The debate over social media's usage and impact on welfare has taken a typical path, with initial optimism about the great uses giving way to universal concerns about potential consequences. Finally, according to the researcher observation and thematic analysis the benefits and drawbacks of using social media are indisputable. It's entirely up to us how we use it. It is necessary that everyone uses social media for the betterment of himself and society.

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