

Demographic Characteristics and Trust on Social Media: A Study

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The aim of this study is to analyze level of trust on social media. For this study required data was collected by social media users from rural, urban and semi urban respondents along with users from different gender, age groups, occupation, income group and various social groups. The overall results of the study indicates that the Trust on social media is not different on the basis of residential location of the users, income level and social category of the user. However, Trust is differ on the basis of Gender, Age and Occupation. It indicates that the gender of the social media users affects the level of trust on social media contents.

Keywords: Social Media, Trust, Gender, Income, Age, Occupation, Social Category.

Introduction

THE social media platforms are part of modern life of the human being. Most of the literate, semi-literate and illiterate persons are using various social media platforms like facebook, WhatsApp, Tweeter, Snapchat, etc. Almost of the users are sharing various types of information, pictures, news, videos and other type of contents on social media without confirmation of its correctness, authenticity and originality. Even though, the sharing is become fashion in the recent days, the social media users sharing many contents on social media for the purpose of get inform to others, connect with others and getting appreciation through the likes and comments (Mark Engler, 2019). However, the question of

trust on social media content is becoming important due to the increasing contents and data on social media. We have to assess the trustworthiness of the social media and level of trust of social media users on social media (Maria Choudhury and Arif Ali, 2020). Hence, the present research was conducted in this line to identify the perception of the social media users regarding trust on it.

Reviews and Research Problem

The social media platforms are increased their reach to rural and urban population like facebook, WhatsApp and Tweeter, etc. We can find that the citizens are now depending on social media for getting information and news (Lawrence and Melinda, 2021). However, Silverman (2016) argued that the most popular fake news stories were more widely shared on facebook than the most popular mainstream news stories many people who see fake news stories report that they believe them. It becomes one of the most important

problems in developing countries like India also. Some of the research work conducted in the USA and Canada also indicated that there is less trustworthiness in the social media platforms. The vast majority of journalists surveyed in the US and Canada claimed that social media platforms have decreased trust in journalism (Rashidian *et al.*, 2018). Fletcher and Park (2017) mentioned that non-mainstream news media like social media are associated with lower levels of trust in news while using mainstream news sources. It indicated that there is problem of trust in social media platforms and that social media had contributed to a decline in trust in journalism. Brand of the social media also plays significant role in the social media trust. Most of users trust on the good brands who maintains trustworthiness of the social media news and contents with their systems and controls. Liu *et al.* (2018) reported that trust in consumers on a brand's social media site influences brand trust. Some researchers mentioned that the non-expert authors often generate low quality, untrusted

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content (Brent Barnhart 2021; Bakshy *et al.*, 2011; Bi, B. Tian *et al.*, 2014; Blomqvist, 1997). The literature clears that there are many reasons behind the trust on social media.

Objectives of the Study and Methods

The present study is mainly focused on to understand the trust on social media;

- To understand the demographics of social media users.
- To examine the trust of social media users on social media sites.
- To draw the strategic applications of findings.

For this study author has collected data through primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was collected through research papers and reports and primary data was collected through online survey and formal discussions with youth in rural and urban area of Maharashtra state of India. For the data collection purposive sampling method was used for sampling and 386 respondents was selected as sample for this study. The collected data was analyzed using statistical software SPSS 21.00.

Hypotheses

- *Null Hypothesis* - There is no significant difference in the trust on social media.
- *Alternative Hypothesis* - There is significant difference in the trust on social media.

The demographic characteristics are most important factors of human being and it affects the

behaviour of the person and their perception too (Carolyn Mara, 2021; Jan Hruska and Petra Maresova, 2020). Hence, these characteristics are used for this study. This hypothesis was divided into six demographic variables for the purpose of testing. The location of the respondent, gender, age groups, income level, occupation and social category are taken into consideration for data collection and testing of this hypothesis.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1 indicates residential location-wise analysis trust on social media, and data shows that only 31.9 per cent of the respondents doing trust on social media and 14 per cent are not doing trust and 54.1 per cent are confused about their opinion.

Trust on Social Media: Residential Location-wise Analysis

Table 1 indicates that the 27.5 per cent rural social media users are trust on social media however, only 1.3 per cent from semi-urban and 3.1 per cent from urban area social media users trust on social media. the factor indicates that rural users have more trust than urban users of social media sites. However, the data also indicate that there is no significant difference in the respondents who trust and who do not trust on social media. If we look at the data there is little variation however, the difference is not significant.

Trust on Social Media: Gender-wise Analysis

Table 2 indicates gender-wise analysis of trust on social media

TABLE 1

TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: RESIDENTIAL LOCATION-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Location	Rural	Count	106	20	162	288
		% of Total	27.5%	5.2%	42.0%	74.6%
	Semi-Urban	Count	5	11	24	40
		% of Total	1.3%	2.8%	6.2%	10.4%
	Urban	Count	12	23	23	58
		% of Total	3.1%	6.0%	6.0%	15.0%
Total		Count	123	54	209	386
		% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

TABLE 2

TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: GENDER-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Gender	Male	Count	87	9	79	175
		% of Total	22.5%	2.3%	20.5%	45.3%
	Female	Count	36	45	130	211
		% of Total	9.3%	11.7%	33.7%	54.7%
Total		Count	123	54	209	386
		% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

and shows that male have more trust on social media than female users. 22.5 per cent male social media user have trust on it however only 9.3 per cent female users have trust on social media

sites. It indicates that the female are not doing trust on social media. However, if we see the respondents saying No and Maybe are higher than who trust on social media.

TABLE 3
TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: AGE-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Age	Below 18	Count	24	0	34	58
		% of Total	6.2%	0.0%	8.8%	15.0%
	18-21	Count	45	54	133	232
		% of Total	11.7%	14.0%	34.5%	60.1%
	22-25	Count	36	0	28	64
		% of Total	9.3%	0.0%	7.3%	16.6%
	26-30	Count	10	0	7	17
		% of Total	2.6%	0.0%	1.8%	4.4%
	Above 30	Count	8	0	7	15
		% of Total	2.1%	0.0%	1.8%	3.9%
	Total	Count	123	54	209	386
		% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

TABLE 4
TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: OCCUPATION-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Occupation	Employee	Count	21	0	76	97
		% of Total	5.4%	0.0%	19.7%	25.1%
	Farmer	Count	74	54	93	221
		% of Total	19.2%	14.0%	24.1%	57.3%
	Businessman	Count	0	0	22	22
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	5.7%
	Self-Employed	Count	2	0	6	8
		% of Total	0.5%	0.0%	1.6%	2.1%
	Casual Labour	Count	26	0	8	34
		% of Total	6.7%	0.0%	2.1%	8.8%
	Other	Count	0	0	4	4
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	Total	Count	123	54	209	386
		% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

Trust on Social Media: Age-wise Analysis

Table 3 Indicates that the social media users in the age group of 19 to 25 are doing more trust on social media than other users. Total 11.7 per cent from age 18 to 21 and 9.3 per cent from age 22 to 25 years have more trust on social media than other users. However, if we see the respondents saying No and Maybe are higher than the who trust on social media.

Trust on Social Media: Occupation-wise Analysis

Table 4 indicates that the farmers and casual labours are doing more trust on social media followed by employees. Total 19.2 per cent farmers, 6.7 per cent casual labours and 5.4 per cent employees are doing trust on social media. However, if we see the respondents saying No and Maybe are higher than the who trust on social media.

Trust on Social Media: Income-wise Analysis

Table 5 indicate that there is not significant difference in the respondents who trust and who do not trust on social media. If we look at the data there is little variation however, the difference is not significant because the distribution of responses are not differ in the each category.

Trust on Social Media: Social Category-wise Analysis

Social category is one of the most important demographic characteristics of respondents hence, it was taken in to

TABLE 5
TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: INCOME-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total	
Income	10 Lac <	Count	7	2	23	32	
		% of Total	1.8%	0.5%	6.0%	8.3%	
	7 to 10 Lac	Count	6	3	17	26	
		% of Total	1.6%	0.8%	4.4%	6.7%	
	4 to 7 Lac	Count	28	19	44	91	
		% of Total	7.3%	4.9%	11.4%	23.6%	
	1 to 4 Lac	Count	45	17	79	141	
		% of Total	11.7%	4.4%	20.5%	36.5%	
	Below 1 Lac	Count	37	13	46	96	
		% of Total	9.6%	3.4%	11.9%	24.9%	
	Total		Count	123	54	209	386
			% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

TABLE 6
TRUST ON SOCIAL MEDIA: SOCIAL CATEGORY-WISE ANALYSIS

			Yes	No	Maybe	Total	
Category	General	Count	67	34	104	205	
		% of Total	17.4%	8.8%	26.9%	53.1%	
	SC/ST	Count	16	8	27	51	
		% of Total	4.1%	2.1%	7.0%	13.2%	
	OBC	Count	26	8	54	88	
		% of Total	6.7%	2.1%	14.0%	22.8%	
	VJA-NT	Count	14	4	24	42	
		% of Total	3.6%	1.0%	6.2%	10.9%	
	Total		Count	123	54	209	386
			% of Total	31.9%	14.0%	54.1%	100.0%

TABLE 7
HYPOTHESIS TEST SUMMARY

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across categories of Location.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.221	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across Social categories	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.624	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across categories of Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.136	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of Trust on Social Media is the same across categories of Occupation.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

consideration, and it is found that there is such difference in the perception of the respondents regarding trust on social media (Table 6).

Hypothesis Testing

The results of Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test and Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test indicates (Table 7) that the sub-hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 are retained and 4, 5 and 6 rejected on the basis of Test Value and Significance Value arrived. It means the trust on social media is not differ by residential location of the social media users, Social Category of the social media users and Income Level of the social media users. However, Trust is differ on the basis of Gender, Age and Occupation.

Conclusion

The overall results of the study found that the Trust is differ on the basis of Gender, Age and Occupation. It indicates that the gender of the social media users

affects the level of trust on social media contents, it is also noticed that the middle age group is the important group in the social media industry because it have significant affect on the social media trust. Even though it is observed that the occupation of the user have impact on the trust of social media. General observation indicates that the persons from different occupation have differnt expectations from the social media and contents shared in social media hence, there is difference of perception and opining of the social media users from different occupations. If we wants to increase more trustworthiness on social media platforms we have to do more attention on the expectations of the social media users especially users from different gender, different age groups and users from different occupations.

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