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### Social media use motives among post graduate students of agricultural sciences

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#### Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, with billions of people around the world using various platforms to connect, access information and enhance their academic and professional knowledge. The present study on social media use motives among post graduate students of agricultural sciences carried out in four state agricultural universities in Maharashtra to study the objective. A total of 216 students were selected among that 192 students were social media users and 24 were nonsocial media users and data collected through online survey method. The social media use motives scale has five dimensions such as diversion, cognitive need, affective need, personal integrative need, social integrative need. The majority of the students use social media platforms to fulfill personal integrative needs such as self-expression and identify information. This study provides valuable insights into the motivations driving social media use among postgraduate students in agricultural sciences, highlighting the significance of personal integrative needs in their online behavior.

**Keywords:** Social media use motives, postgraduate students, agricultural sciences, personal integrative needs, self-expression, identity formation

#### Introduction

Social media usage is on the rise since the early 2000s. Nowadays social media plays a crucial role in the lives of young adults. In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has revolutionized the way individuals communicate, interact, and consume information. With the advent of smartphones and easy access to the internet, social media has transformed the way individuals communicate, share information, and interact with one another. There were 751.5 million internet users in India at the start of 2024, when internet penetration stood at 52.4 per cent. India was home to 462.0 million social media users in January 2024, equating to 78 per cent of the total population. A total of 1.12 billion cellular mobile connections were active in India in early 2024, with this figure equivalent to 78.0 percent of the total population. (DIGITAL 2024 INDIA Report) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Social media use motives refer to the reasons or purpose behind using social media platforms. One of the primary social media use motives is social interaction. Students use social media platforms to connect with friends and family,

to join online communities and groups. Social media platforms enable users to engage in real-time conversations with others. Also, the significant motive for social media use is information seeking. Individuals use social media to stay up to date with current events, find answers to questions related to the research work, and learn new things. Entertainment is also a major motive for social media usage. In addition to these motives, social media use can also be driven by self-expression and personal identity. People use social media to share their thoughts and express their opinions and perspectives and showcase their creativity and talents.

Social media use is not specifically limited to adolescents as adults also use social media platforms as an important socializing and information tool Heo *et al.*, (2015) <sup>[5]</sup>, Schivinski *et al.*, (2019) <sup>[13]</sup> with social media use influencing different types of behavior across the entire lifespan Kuss *et al.*, (2013) <sup>[7]</sup> Schivinski *et al.*, (2019) <sup>[13]</sup>. Previous research investigating the negative outcomes of social media use indicated that problematic social media use

(PSMU) may lead to deteriorated psychological well-being Huang (2012) [6], Lin *et al.*, (2016) [10] and overall health Pontes (2017) [11], Brailovskaia *et al.*, (2020) [3]. One of the most prominent negative effects of social media use relates to problematic use stemming from dysregulated usage Kuss and Griffiths (2017) [8] often triggered by the design of the social media platforms. According to Twienge and Campbell (2019) [14], social media use also helps people feel more connected to others, which may lessen social isolation. Social media plays an important role in the lives of people of all ages as they take advantage of their sense of belonging in various communities Roberts and David (2020) [12]. It offers a variety of ways to interact with both weak ties, such as co-workers, acquaintances, and strangers, and close ties, such as family, friends, and relatives Chen and Li (2017) [4].

**Objective:** To study social media use motives among post graduate students of agricultural sciences

**Methodology**

The “Ex-post-facto” research design was used for the study. This “Ex-post-facto” design was considered appropriate because the phenomenon has already occurred. It is the most systematic empirical study in which the researcher does not have direct control over independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred. The study was conducted in the jurisdiction of all four State Agricultural Universities of Maharashtra namely;

1. Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth (MPKV), Rahuri
2. Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth (DBSKKV), Dapoli
3. Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth (VNMKV), Parbhani
4. Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth (PKV), Akola

Post Graduate students from 4 State Agricultural Universities of Maharashtra selected for the present study. The students from master’s degree and doctoral degree were selected as respondents for this study. Total sample size comprised of 216 post graduate students from only agricultural sciences. The proportionate sample selected from each university on basis they’re of their intake capacity. The total 216 students were selected among that 192 were social media users and 24 were non users. The data was collected through online survey using the KOBO Tool box. The necessary information was collected from the

respondents with the help of the standardized questionnaire prepare using Kobo Toolbox application for the study. The proper instructions and information provided to the students for getting accurate data. Simple Random sampling method used. They were assured that the information collected would be used only for the study purpose without disclosing their identity. Social media use motives measured with the help of social media use motives scale adopted from Ali Iffat *et al.*, (2019) [2]. There were five dimensions such as diversion, cognitive need, affective need, personal integrative needs, social integrative need including 20 statements. The responses were obtained on five points continuums namely strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree with a score of five, four, three, two and one respectively. The dimensions of social media use motives were ranked on the basis of percent scores.

**Results and Discussion**

Social media use motives refer to the underlying reasons or purposes that drive individuals to use social media platforms, such as to connect with others, seek information, share experiences, or alleviate loneliness. Here the rank given to the dimensions of student’s social media use motive shown below Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of students according to their social media use motives

Sr. No.	Social media use motives	% score	Rank
1.	Diversion	20.18	3
2.	Cognitive Need	17.02	4
3.	Affective Need	21.40	2
4.	Personal Integrative needs	22.47	1
5.	Social Integrative Need	18.93	5

From table 1 the result indicated that individuals' primary motivation for social media use is to fulfill personal integrative needs (22.47%), such as self-expression and identity formation. Affective Needs, like emotional support and relaxation, rank second (21.40%) followed by diversion need (20.18%), social integrative needs (18.93%) and cognitive need (17.02%) respectively. These findings showed that social media users are primarily driven by personal and emotional factors, rather than purely informational or social purposes. The ranking of dimensions highlights the importance of addressing users' personal and emotional need of the student.

**Table 2:** Distribution of students according to their social media use motives

Sr. No	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>A.</b>	<b>Diversion</b>					
1.	I use social media to make me feel less lonely	39 (20.31)	20 (10.42)	51 (26.56)	28 (14.58)	54 (28.13)
2.	I use social media to pass time when I am bored	19 (9.90)	24 (12.50)	37 (19.27)	93 (48.44)	19 (9.90)
3.	I use social media to escape my worries	33 (17.19)	28 (14.58)	44 (22.92)	41 (21.35)	46 (23.96)
4.	I start using social media when I have nothing better to do	29(15.10)	31 (16.15)	46 (23.96)	67 (34.90)	19 (9.90)
<b>B.</b>	<b>Cognitive need</b>					
5.	I use social media for research and studies	17 (8.85)	15 (7.81)	42 (21.88)	49 (25.52)	69 (35.94)
6.	I use social media to search job/ online business/ scholarship	19 (9.90)	18 (9.38)	46 (23.96)	71 (36.98)	38 (19.79)
7.	I use social media to gain knowledge	15 (7.81)	15 (7.81)	36 (18.75)	50 (26.04)	76 (39.58)
8.	Social media gave me information about others	15 (7.81)	17 (8.85)	38 (19.79)	85 (44.27)	37 (19.27)
<b>C.</b>	<b>Affective needs</b>					

9.	Use of social media is one of the routine things I do when I'm online	21 (10.94)	10 (5.21)	33 (17.19)	64 (33.33)	64 (33.33)
10.	I use social media to express my emotions to others easily	54 (28.13)	24 (12.50)	40 (20.83)	52 (27.08)	22 (11.46)
11.	I use social media to develop romantic relationship	68 (35.42)	17 (8.85)	28 (14.58)	46 (23.96)	33 (17.19)
12.	I use social media to talk about my problems and get advice	54 (28.13)	25 (13.02)	34 (17.71)	55 (28.65)	24 (12.50)
<b>D.</b>	<b>Personal Integrative needs</b>					
13.	Social media is part of my self-image	54 (28.13)	14 (7.29)	45 (23.44)	41 (21.35)	38 (19.79)
14.	Social media portrays an image of me to others	51 (26.56)	18 (9.38)	44 (22.92)	56 (29.17)	23 (11.98)
15.	People can use social media to judge me	60 (31.25)	21 (10.94)	26 (13.54)	51 (26.56)	34 (17.71)
16.	I use social media to gain favourable approval among friends	54 (28.13)	24 (12.50)	33 (17.19)	65 (33.85)	16 (8.33)
<b>E.</b>	<b>Social integrative need</b>					
17.	I use social media to communicate with my friends	21 (10.94)	16 (8.33)	36 (18.75)	58 (30.21)	61 (31.77)
18.	I use social media to stay in touch with family	33 (17.19)	21 (10.94)	28 (14.58)	68 (35.42)	42 (21.88)
19.	I use social media to add new friends	40 (20.83)	20 (10.42)	32 (16.67)	56 (29.17)	44 (22.92)
20.	I use social media to find more interesting people than in real life	31 (16.15)	20 (10.42)	34 (17.71)	68 (35.42)	39 (20.31)

The survey result indicated that social media use was driven by various motives, including diversion, cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs. Diversion dimension indicated that (20.31%) of respondents strongly agree that they used social media to feel less lonely, while (28.13%) strongly disagree. The (48.44%) of respondents disagree that they used social media to pass time when bored. Cognitive Need dimension indicates that (35.94%) of respondents strongly disagree that they used social media for research and studies and (36.98%) of respondents disagree that they used social media to search for jobs or online business/scholarship opportunities. Affective Needs dimension expressed that (28.13%) of respondents strongly agree that they used social media to express their emotions to others easily. While (35.42%) of respondents strongly agree that they used social media to develop romantic relationships. Personal Integrative Needs (28.13%) of respondents strongly agree that social media was part of their self-image and (31.25%) of respondents strongly agree that people used social media to judge them. Social Integrative Need (31.77%) of respondents strongly disagree that they used social media to communicate with friends. While the (35.42%) of respondents disagree that they explore social media to stay in touch with family. The previous findings from personality psychology demonstrated that social media users tend to be slightly more extraverted than non-users Marengo *et al.*, (2020) <sup>[9]</sup> and it is well-known that extraverts have a stronger urge to socially interact with other persons.

**Conclusion**

It was observed that the utilization of social media was driven by a range of motives, including socializing, self-expression, and information-seeking. The findings also indicated that students had mixed opinions about the role of social media in their lives, with some using it to feel less lonely or to develop romantic relationships, while others hold different opinion. This study helped to inform and build strategies for promoting healthy social media use and mitigating potential negative effects. From the study, the majority (22.47%) of respondents used social media platforms for personal integrative need to enhanced their self-esteem, develop identity while other respondents used social media for affective need, diversion need, social integrative need and cognitive need.

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