Youth, Social Media, and the Shift in Communication Patterns

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of social media on the cultural behaviors and communication preferences of youth in Surat City, India. A survey was administered to 410 young adults aged 17–32 to assess the influence of social media on cultural adoption, communication shifts, and usage motivations. The results indicate that social media significantly shapes youth culture, with 50% of respondents adopting cultural practices related to food, clothing, or slang due to social media exposure. While youth acknowledged the negative effects of social media on face-to-face communication, they strongly valued in-person interactions and disagreed that online relationships could fulfill their social needs comparably. Motivations for use were primarily informational, with seeking news and learning about fashion trends ranking higher than social compensation motives. Significant gender differences emerged, with females prioritizing social connections and males focusing on aesthetic trends. The findings reveal that social media acts not as a replacement for traditional culture but as a transformative medium for cultural negotiation, where global trends are selectively integrated into local contexts. This study underscores the dual role of social media as both a disruptor and an enabler of cultural practices, highlighting implications for digital literacy and cultural preservation in urban Indian youth.

Introduction:

The pervasive integration of social media into the daily lives of young people has fundamentally altered the landscape of communication, cultural expression, and social interaction (Shi, 2023). As digital natives, contemporary youth navigate a world where online and offline experiences are increasingly intertwined, leading to significant shifts in cultural norms and behaviors (Viktoriya, 2019). This study investigates this phenomenon within the context of Surat City, India, a rapidly urbanizing environment where global digital trends converge with local traditions. The research seeks to understand the extent to which social media platforms influence the cultural practices of youth, reshape their communication preferences, and serve as a conduit for global cultural flows (Dhillon, 2025). By examining these dynamics, this paper aims to contribute to the broader discourse on technology's role in shaping modern youth identity and social structures in a non-Western, urban setting.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview and background study; the researcher looks into the past studies which is already been done worldwide and also across India.

Research has been conducted by (Viktoriya, 2019) aimed to find out how social media and digital technologies affect the social and communication aspects of culture and

identifying the opportunities and risks. The outcomes shows that internet and virtual communities play a significant role on youth's interaction and cultural exchange by paving grounds for the opportunities and also creating risks. (Shah, 2024) conducted a survey among 240 youngsters across Kerala to find out how social media platforms affect news consumption among young generation in Kerala. The findings show that close to half of the youth elect social media over digital and print media to know the news update. Furthermore, the results indicated youth not using social media only to read the news but also it is the platform to share and discuss as well. This kind of findings will be provided with a useful background for the current study in Surat city which seeking to find out the social interaction and youths' culture.

(Shi, 2023) examines how social media use become a significant part of youth culture and its several impacts on youth identity, mental health and behaviour. He argues that there are both the positive results like a greater freedom to express oneself, academic team works and an opportunity for shy youth to express themselves. and also, negative outcomes like information silos, online victimization, insomnia, body image, harmful role models, weak self-concept and emotional disorders. followed by the most important point which is mentioned by research is the content that is being created by social media influencers and the contents suggested by algorithms could result in adolescents' priorities and modes of living. Social media provides the chances for communication and self-discovery but deleterious use can lead to damage social development and emotions.

(Ayla Oden, 2023) Conducted a survey on 1315 teenagers of US residents between the ages of 13-17 years to investigate how the young generation use social media and to find out the impact on their political interest and civic engagement. The results indicate that social media apps like Instagram, TikTok boost political awareness and participation among teenagers, however they do not lead to polarization. This indicates that social media is not just a tool for entertainment but rather it is also a platform where young people actively shape their social and cultural roles. Another study by (Tingting Fan, 2025) shows there is a reciprocal relation between posting on social media and social support among youths, specifically among close friends. Those youths who felt supported by their close friends most likely increased their post on social media and this made them reinforce their understanding from the social understanding. However, classmates' support had an opposite attitude, more support from classmates leads to decrease the number of posts on social media. Furthermore, self-confidence and attitude toward technology modulated these effects, youngsters with low self-esteem benefited more from posting on social media.

Research indicated that as young people are spending much of their time on social media online and this has increased their digital interaction and reduced the meaningful in-person relationships which leads to feeling to loneliness among youth. This highlights social media role on changing the youth identity, leading them in online communication that may be taking the place of traditional social interactions. (Pediatrics, 2005). 74 students who were Instagram users were surveyed at the University of Negeri Makassar (UNM), to find out the relation between Instagram and self-esteem. The researcher argue that feedbacks like, comments, sharing posts and commenting on Instagram significantly increase the self-confidence of the students. This uncovers how social media affect the self-expression and identity formation among youth. (Inayah Zulfianti, 2024)

Posts about luxury products by influencers, friends, and brands on social media inspire youth to buy. Based on an interview with 24 Koreans aged 14-24 who has recently bought luxury items showed that majority of them has been influenced by the posts they have seen on social media and also it is reported that after purchasing the product they are willing to take photos and share it on social media to gain approval and to impower social connections. This indicates that social media play a major role on the decision making and buying habits of young people, this is a very clear example that shows how social media has influence the youths' behaviour about shopping. (Chun, 2025). An analysis of 2061 posts from 1038 social media users aged 15-17 revealed that there is a variation on how social media influences young generation life and behaviour, as each of them have their own unique impact, like there is a connection between Instagram and body image issues, to find a romantic partner youths refer to social media and the findings indicated that majority of youths are much concerned about their privacy leak in Facebook, this suggest how social media affect youths' identity and cultural norms. (Abdulmalik Alluhidan, 2024). The way social media being used by youngsters vary significantly in each nationality, for example the study by (Dhillon, 2025) examined two different nationalities Indians and Iraq youths toward social media usage patterns. As observed India youths use platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp for education, career purpose and peer communication and Iraq youngsters use TikTok and Facebook for political engagements, activism and shaping group identities. This indicates that youths in India use social media to develop education, career enhancement and communication which leads toward development. On the other hand, Iraq youths use social media to create conflicts in the society which leads to an unstable society. Platform preference and online behaviour shaped by youth, impact on the society.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 410 students aged 17 to 30, recruited from various universities and colleges in Surat City. A purposive sampling technique was used to specifically target active social media users to ensure the data directly pertained to the research objectives. The sample encompassed both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students across diverse academic disciplines. Data analysis was performed using SPSS, utilizing descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, t-tests, correlation analysis, and non-parametric tests like the Friedman test to identify significant patterns and relationships.

Objectives

1. To identify the cultural behaviours of youth that are influenced by social media.
2. To assess the relationship between social media engagement and shifts in youth culture.
3. To analyse changes in communication preferences among youth due to social media use.

Hypotheses

Cultural Influence

- **H$_1$ (Alternative):** Social media usage has a **significant positive impact** on shaping the cultural behaviors and practices of youth in Surat City.
- **H$_0$ (Null):** Social media usage has **no significant impact** on the cultural behaviors and practices of youth in Surat City.

Analysis

1. **Frequency Distribution of Participants by Academic Program**

Table 1
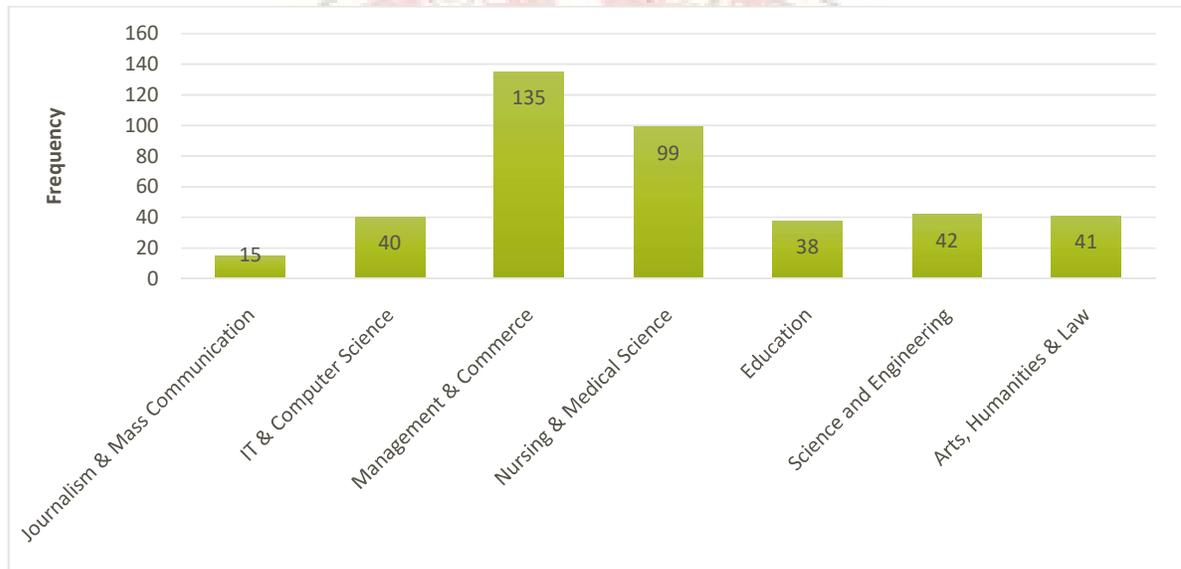
Program	Frequency	Valid Percent
Journalism & Mass Communication	15	3.7
IT & Computer Science	40	9.8
Management & Commerce	135	32.9
Nursing & Medical Science	99	24.1
Education	38	9.3

Science and Engineering	42	10.2
Arts, Humanities & Law	41	10.0
Total	410	100.0

Table 1 and figure 1 present the distribution of participants by different departments of study. The findings indicate that most of the respondents were from the Management &Commerce faculty (32.9%), followed by Nursing & Medical Sciences (24.1%), Science and Engineering (10.2%), and Arts, Humanities & Law (10.0%). Fewer participants were linked with IT & Computer Science (9.8%) and Education (9.3%), and minimum was observed in Journalism & Mass Communication (3.7%).

Figure 1:

This indicates the fact that the sample was predominantly made up by students engaged in Management and Commerce study.

2. **Your Gender**

Table 2: Gender of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	176	42.9
Female	234	57.1
Total	410	100.0

Table 2 and Figure 2 indicate the distribution by gender among the participants. Out of 410 participants, females made up 57.1% (n = 234), while males made up 42.9% (n = 176). This indicates a slight higher participation of females compared to males in the sample of the research. Non of the participants hide their gender (n=0).

Figure 2:Gender Distribution of Participants
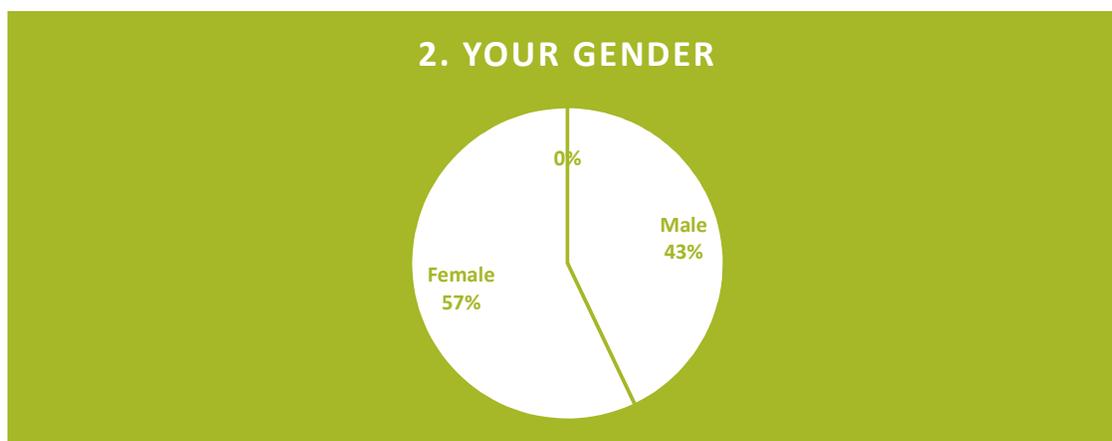
The pie chart shown in Figure 1 visually shows that females made up a larger portion of the participants, representing more than half of the entire sample.

3. Age distribution of the participants

Table 3:

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
17	28	6.8	6.8	6.8
18	63	15.4	15.4	22.2
19	101	24.6	24.6	46.8
20	93	22.7	22.7	69.5
21	54	13.2	13.2	82.7
22	27	6.6	6.6	89.3
23	22	5.4	5.4	94.6
24	9	2.2	2.2	96.8
25	4	1.0	1.0	97.8
26	2	.5	.5	98.3
27	3	.7	.7	99.0
28	1	.2	.2	99.3
29	2	.5	.5	99.8
32	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	410	100.0	100.0	

The age distribution of participants (N = 410) indicates a predominantly young adult sample, ranging from 17 to 32 years (M = 19.98, SD = 2.10). The distribution is positively

skewed, with most respondents concentrated at the lower end of the age range. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 3, 69.5% of participants were aged 17–20, with 19 years being the most frequent age (24.6%). These findings confirm the effective recruitment of a youth cohort, consistent with the study's focus on the population of Surat City.

Figure 3:

Histogram of Age distribution of the participants
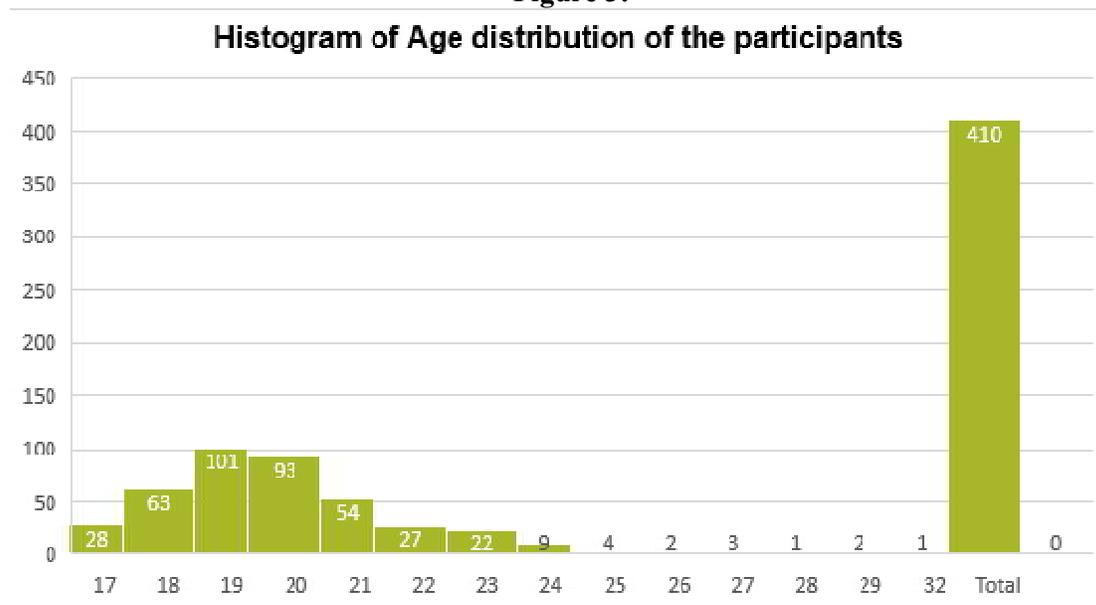
4. **Place of living of the participants:**

Table 4:

Place	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Urban (within a city)	320	78.0	78.0	78.0
Rural (village or countryside	52	12.7	12.7	90.7
Suburban/ Near to a city	32	7.8	7.8	98.5
Other	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	410	100.0	100.0	

The residential background of the participants is detailed in Table 4 and figure 4, the data indicates that the sample is overwhelmingly urban. A Significant percentage of participants (78.0%, n = 320) said that they reside in urban settings in a city. Participants from rural sites (village or countryside) comprised 12.7% (n = 52), and participants from suburban areas or places next to a city comprised 7.8% (n = 32). A low percentage (1.5%, n = 6) put their residence under "Other."

Figure 4: Place of living of the respondents
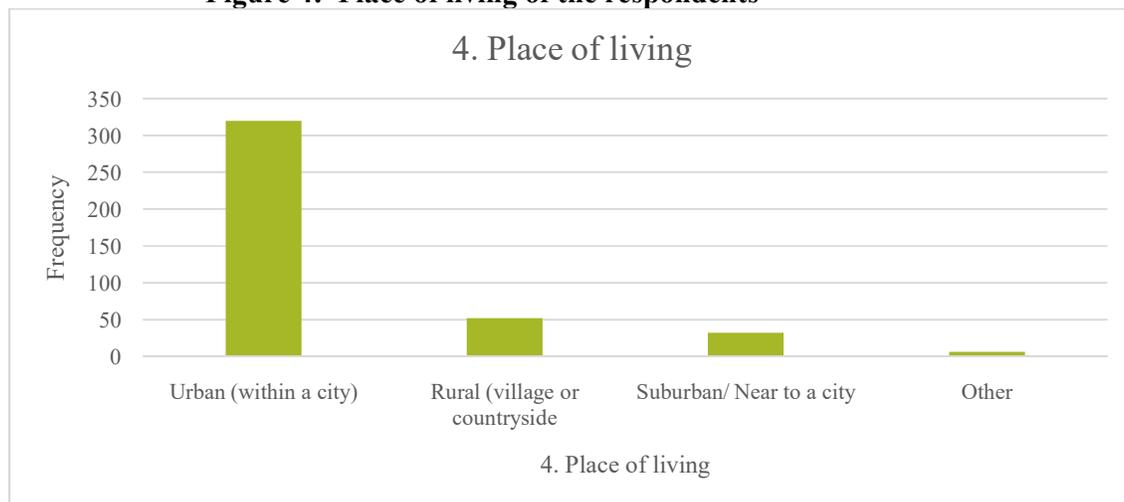
This is in line with the fact that the study was focusing on Surat City, a major city, and thus confirms that results mostly represent an urban youth perspective.

5. Which State you belong to?

The place of origin of participants is summarized in Table 5. The results indicate that the sample is strongly dominated by the local population. The vast majority of participants are from the Gujarat State (94.6%, n = 388). Participants from other than Gujarat regions are a minor portion of the sample size (5.4%, n = 22).

Table 5:

Place	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gujarat	388	94.6	94.6	94.6
Outside Gujarat	22	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	410	100.0	100.0	

6. Which degree are you pursuing?

Table 6:

Degree	Frequency	Percent (%)
UG	313	76.3
PG	85	20.7
PhD	12	2.9

Total	410	100.0

As Table 2 and Figure 2 indicate the respondent's academic level is such that the overwhelming majority were at the undergraduate (UG) level, 76.3% were on UG courses, while 20.7% were on postgraduate (PG) programs. A small minority, 2.9%, were on PhD programs.

Figure 5:
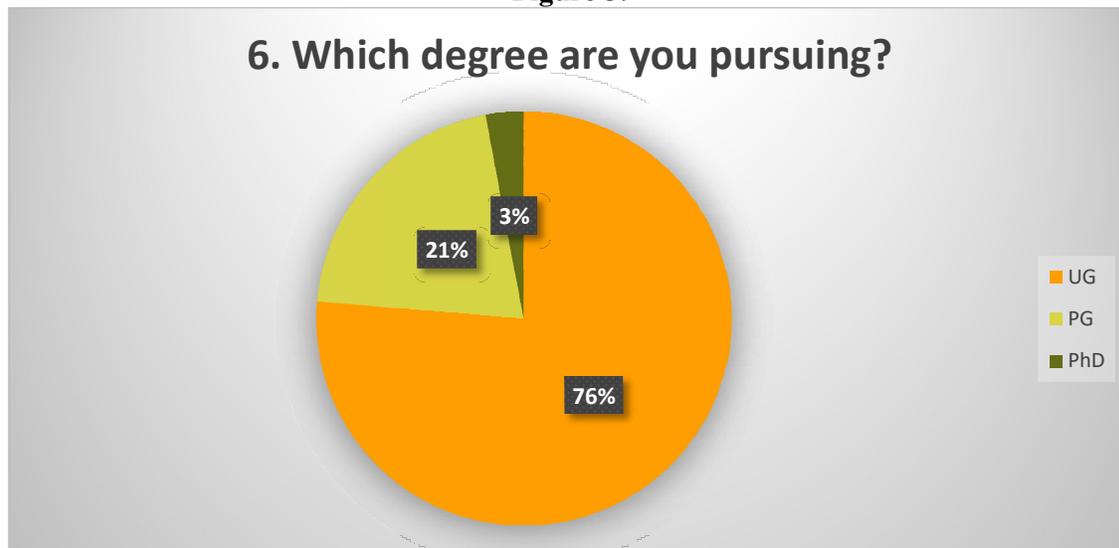

7. **Parents education status**

Table 7:

Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Both Educated	297	72.4
Both Uneducated	35	8.5
Only Father Educated	51	12.4
Only Mother Educated	13	3.2
Other	14	3.4
Total	410	100.0

The highest number of respondents is from families with literate parents. As outlined in Table 7 and portrayed in Figure 7, the highest percentage at 72.4 reported that both parents are educated while 8.5 reported that both parents are illiterate. Furthermore, 12.4 of the respondents reported that only the father is literate while 3.2 reported that only the mother is literate.

The other responses added up to another 3.4%. These are situations wherein the respondents reported that both parents have some incomplete schooling, such as only at the

primary school level or only at the secondary school level. The responses were also summarized under the Other category solely for the purpose of analysis.

Figure 6:
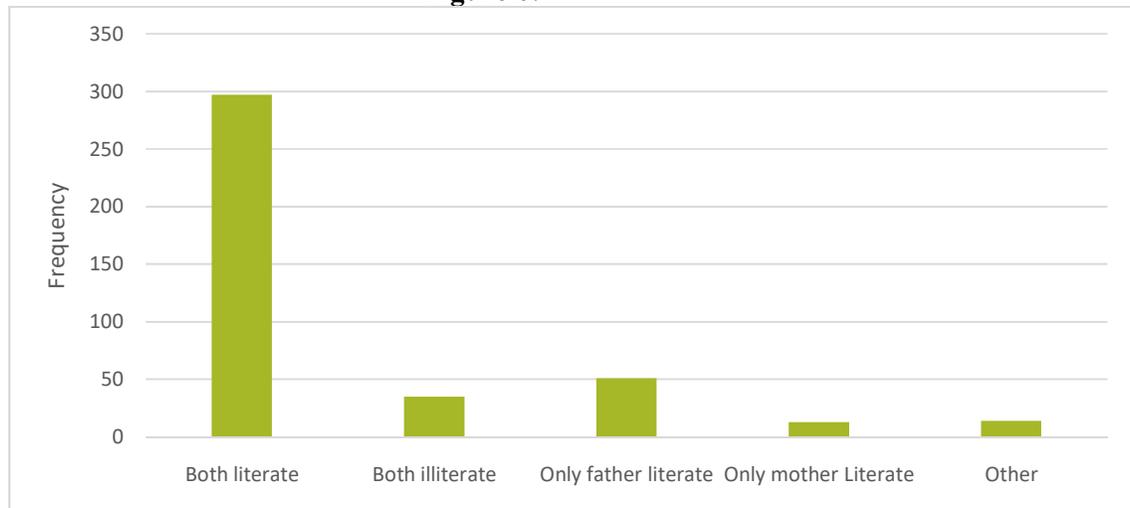
Its findings also illuminate the prevalence of largely educated parental heritage among the respondents, something that could affect family-based support as well as school aspirations.

8. **How often do you share something on your social media?**

Table 8:

Level	Frequency	Percent
Never	78	19.0
Rarely	168	41.0
A few times a month	57	13.9
A few times a week	37	9.0
Daily	62	15.1
I really don't know	8	2.0
Total	410	100.0

The examination of how frequently members post on social media suggests differing levels of activity. Most respondents (41%, n = 168) responded that they rarely post. Next, 19% (n = 78) reported that they never post anything on social media. Further, 15.1% (n = 62) reported that they post daily, while 13.9% (n = 57) posted information a few times monthly.

Fewer, 9% (n = 37), reported they post information a few times weekly, while 2% (n = 8) did not know how often they post.

Figure 7: Content sharing habits of youth in social media
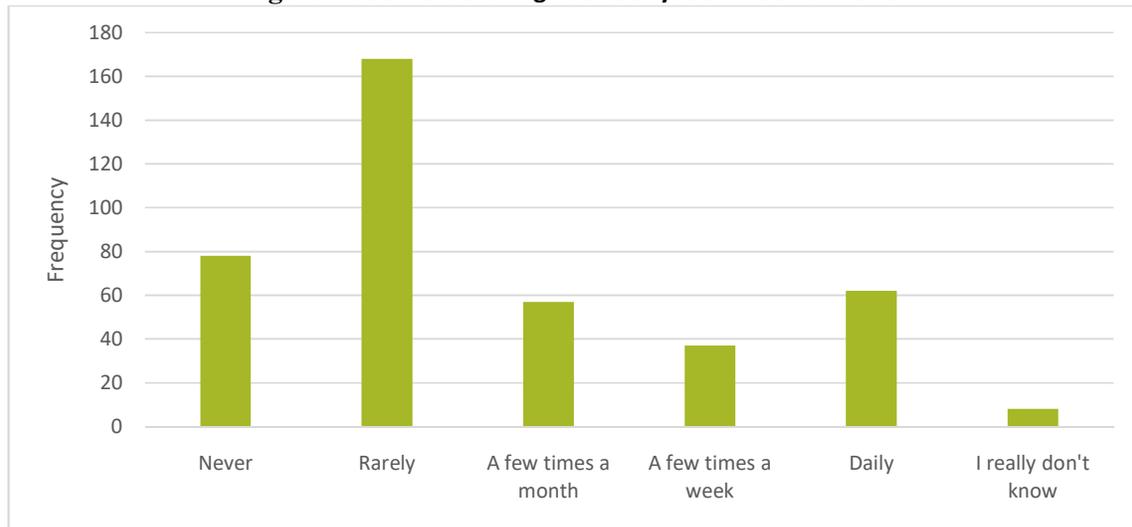
As presented in Table 8 and in Figure 8, while a considerable number of participants are active in social media, a high number of respondents reported as they prefer to engage less frequently with little or no sharing being the most typical. This then shows the pattern of little or no content being produced or contributed, and therefore most users tend to be consumers of, as much as creators of or sharers of social media.

9. **How often do you share your personal achievements (e.g., awards, promotions, milestones) on social media?**

Table 9:

Level	Frequency	Percent
Always	34	8.3
Often	22	5.4
Sometimes	94	22.9
Rarely	106	25.9
Never	154	37.6
Total	410	100.0

Among the 410 respondents, the majority of the respondents indicated that they never post their personal achievements, like awards, progress, and milestones, on social media (37.6%). They were followed by hardly ever (25.9%) and at times (22.9%), which implies that although there are some who post this type of material occasionally, the majority don't. Lower shares indicated that they always (8.3%) or often (5.4%) post achievements.

Figure 8:
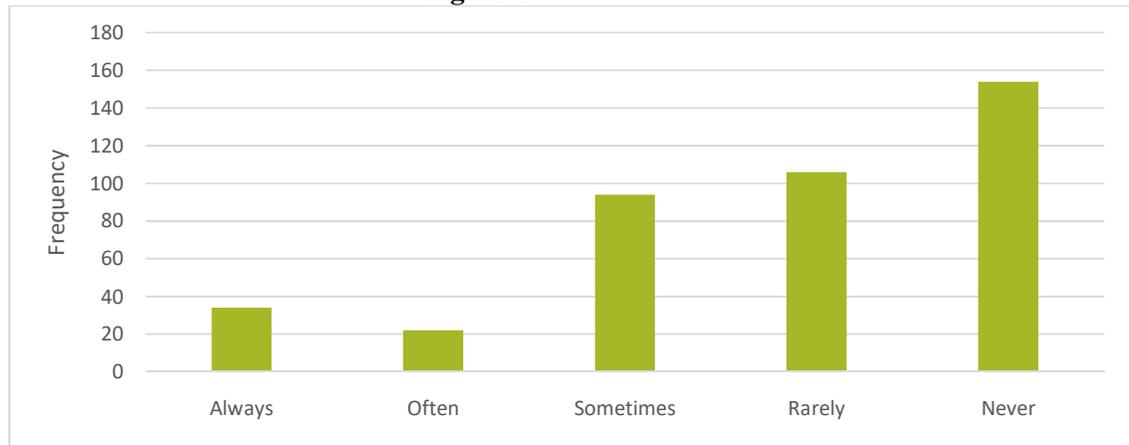
The bar chart also graphically supports such findings with the highest occurrence at "Never" and then gradation toward "Always." This implies that quite a number of respondents are hesitant in announcing personal milestones in public, perhaps because of their concern over privacy, culture, or personal beliefs. Generally, announcing achievements is no universal habit among the respondents.

Chi-Square Test of Association Between Sharing on social media and Sharing Personal Achievements				
Test	χ^2	df	N	p
Pearson Chi-Square	19.619	20	410	.482
Linear-by-Linear Association	.806	1	410	.369

A Chi-Square test of independence was used to investigate the relationship between Q8 (the frequency which they post something on social media) and Q9 (the frequency which they post personal achievements on social media). The findings indicated no statistically significant correlation between the two variables, $\chi^2(20, N = 410) = 19.619$, p = .482.Further, the Linear-by-Linear Association test was performed in an attempt to determine if there was any pattern through the ordinal measures. The test was insignificant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.806$, p = .369,

so we can observe that more general frequency of sharing does not equal more sharing of personal achievement

These findings suggest that the frequency of general sharing on social media does not significantly influence how often individuals share their personal achievement

Gender Differences in Frequency of Sharing on social media			8. Frequency of sharing something on your social media						Total
			Never	Rarely	A few times a month	A few times a week	Daily	I really don't know	
2. Gender	Male	Count	33	64	19	18	37	5	176
		% within 2. Your Gender	18.8%	36.4%	10.8%	10.2%	21.0%	2.8%	100.0%
		8. Frequency of Sharing	42.3%	38.1%	33.3%	48.6%	59.7%	62.5%	42.9%
		% of Total	8.0%	15.6%	4.6%	4.4%	9.0%	1.2%	42.9%
	Female	Count	45	104	38	19	25	3	234
		% within 2. Your Gender	19.2%	44.4%	16.2%	8.1%	10.7%	1.3%	100.0%
		8. Frequency of sharing	57.7%	61.9%	66.7%	51.4%	40.3%	37.5%	57.1%
		% of Total	11.0%	25.4%	9.3%	4.6%	6.1%	0.7%	57.1%
Total		Count	78	168	57	37	62	8	410
		% within 2. Your Gender	19.0%	41.0%	13.9%	9.0%	15.1%	2.0%	100.0%
		% within 8. Frequency of sharing	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	19.0%	41.0%	13.9%	9.0%	15.1%	2.0%	100.0%

Crosstab analysis looks at the correlation of gender with the use of social media content-sharing frequency. We can see from the data that the female population is more inclined to share content in the majority of the frequency bands compared to the male population. For example, for those who share "rarely," we have 61.9% who are female and only 38.1% male. Similarly, in the "a few times a month" and "daily" bands, we have 66.7% and 40.3% female respectively compared to 33.3% and 59.7% male. While male populations dominate marginally in the "daily" use category, female populations are ahead in all the remaining moderate-level frequencies, suggesting a higher propensity for social media content-sharing in general. From the trend, female respondents are more active in the practice of online sharing compared to their male counterparts.

Following the crosstabulation, a Chi-Square Test of Independence was also conducted toanalyse the association between gender and frequency ofsharing contents on social media. Results showed a statistically significant relationship, $\chi^2(5) = 12.600$, p = .027, such that gender is a factor in determining how often people are likely to share on social media.

Confirmatory evidence from the Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 12.563$, p = .028) and the Linear-by-Linear Association ($\chi^2 = 6.931$, p = .008) indicates a possible ordinal pattern too. Though 2 cells (16.7%) had expected values below 5, the lowest expected count of 3.43 falls within acceptable range. Observing crosstab data, females indicated a higher trend of sharing more often than did males, particularly in such categories as "Rarely," "A few times a month," and "Daily." It indicates female participants are more actively involved in sharing material on social media platforms compared to male participants.

Chi-Square Tests			
Test	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	12.600[a]	5	.027
Likelihood Ratio	12.563	5	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.931	1	.008
a. 2 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.43.			

Social Media Influence on Youth Behaviour and Communication Preferences

Participants rated their agreement with statements about how social media affects their behaviour, communication preferences, and cultural values, including online versus face-to-face interaction and emotional expression.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I prefer online communication over face-to-face interaction.	410	1	5	3.01	1.312
I feel more comfortable to discuss personal problems online.]	410	1	5	2.46	1.336
I prefer discussing my personal problems with online friends rather than parents.]	410	1	5	2.54	1.377
I feel more connected to people online rather than face-to-face interactions.	410	1	5	2.55	1.281
Social media significantly influences how I express my tho1hts and emotions.	410	1	5	2.99	1.231

My online identity plays an important role in shaping or reflecting my real-life identity.	410	1	5	2.62	1.198
Social media impacts my personal values and beliefs.	410	1	5	2.79	1.246
I prefer being in a relationship over getting married, and social media influences this preference.	410	1	5	2.28	1.368
Valid N (listwise)	410				

Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine participants' responses to eight Likert-scale statements assessing the influence of social media on youth behavior and communication preferences. As shown in Table X, the statement *"I prefer online communication over face-to-face interaction"* recorded the highest mean score (**M = 3.01, SD = 1.31**), indicating a neutral to slightly positive preference among participants. Similarly, items related to online emotional expression (*M = 2.99*) and the impact of social media on values (*M = 2.79*) showed moderate agreement. In contrast, lower mean scores were observed for statements such as *"I prefer being in a relationship over getting married, and social media influences this preference"* (**M = 2.28, SD = 1.37**) and *"I feel more comfortable discussing personal problems online"* (**M = 2.46, SD = 1.34**), suggesting a general tendency toward disagreement. The standard deviations ranged from **1.20 to 1.38**, indicating a moderate level of variability in responses across items. Overall, the findings suggest that while some youth are influenced by social media in areas like communication and emotional expression, there is less agreement regarding its role in shaping deeper personal values or preferences such as relationship views.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.819	8

Reliability testing was conducted on the 8-item scale measuring the effect of social media on youths. The finding showed a high level of reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of .819, implying that the items reliably measure a comparable construct.

No.	Statement	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-value	p-value	Mean Difference	Sig. (p < 0.05)?
1	I prefer online communication over face-	2.99	3.02	0.206	0.837	-0.027	No

|						
	to-face interaction.					
2	I feel more comfortable to discuss personal problems online.	2.54	2.41	1.004	0.316	0.134	No
3	I prefer discussing my personal problems with online friends rather than parents.	2.74	2.39	**2.573**	**0.010**	**0.351**	**Yes**
4	I feel more connected to people online rather than face-to-face interactions.	2.66	2.46	1.548	0.122	0.198	No
5	Social media significantly influences how I express my thoughts and emotions.	3.01	2.97	0.370	0.711	0.046	No
6	My online identity plays an important role in shaping or reflecting my real-life identity.	2.74	2.52	1.871	0.062	0.223	No (marginal)
7	Social media impacts my personal values and beliefs.	2.87	2.72	1.184	0.237	0.147	No
8	I prefer being in a relationship over getting married, and social media influences this preference.	2.52	2.09	**3.207**	**0.001**	**0.433**	**Yes**

Based on the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to examine gender differences in attitudes toward online communication, social media influence, and identity, two statements showed statistically significant differences between male and female respondents. Males (M = 2.74) were significantly more likely than females (M = 2.39) to prefer discussing their personal problems with online friends rather than with their parents, $t(408) = 2.573$, $p = .010$. Additionally, males (M = 2.52) expressed a stronger preference for being in a relationship over getting married, influenced by social media, compared to females (M = 2.09), $t(408) = 3.207$, $p = .001$. These findings suggest that males are more inclined to seek emotional support from online peers and are more influenced by social media in shaping

their views on relationships. No significant gender differences were found in the remaining six statements, although the item regarding the influence of online identity on real-life identity showed a marginally significant result ($p = .062$), indicating a potential area for further exploration. Overall, the data suggest that while general attitudes toward social media and online interaction are similar across genders, certain personal and relational aspects are more strongly influenced among males.

10. Do you use Social Media?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	387	94.4	94.4
alid	No	23	5.6	100.0
	total	410	100.0	

11. DO YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?
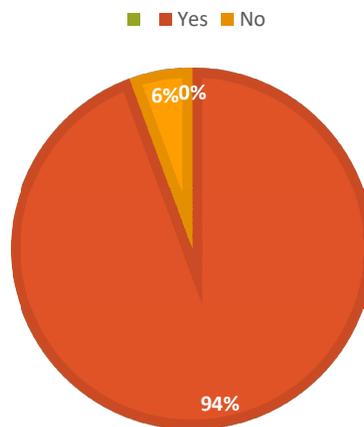
Based on the data presented in the frequency table and pie chart, the vast majority of respondents reported using social media. Out of a total of 410 participants, 387 individuals (94.4%) indicated that they use social media, while only 23 individuals (5.6%) reported that they do not.The findings clearly indicate that social media usage is highly prevalent among the surveyed population, suggesting that any analysis or conclusions drawn about social media's influence are relevant to the vast majority of participants.

11. Do you use your real identity online, or a pseudonym (fake name)?
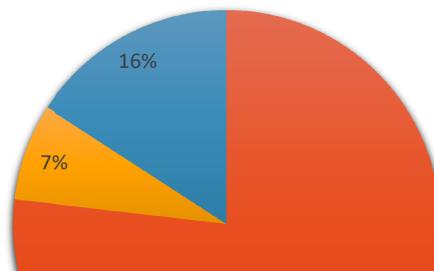
Based on the frequency table and pie chart regarding the use of real identity or pseudonyms online, the majority of respondents reported using their **real name** when engaging online. Out of 410 participants, **315 individuals (76.8%)** indicated that they use their real name, while **30 individuals (7.3%)** reported using a pseudonym or fake name. Additionally, **65 participants (15.9%)** stated that they use a **mixed identity**, sometimes using their real name and sometimes a pseudonym. This distribution shows that most people prefer to maintain authenticity online, although a notable portion—nearly one in four—either hide their identity or vary their identity depending on context. The results suggest that while transparency is common in online spaces, anonymity and flexibility in identity still play a significant role for a considerable number of users.

Is there a significant association between gender and the type of online identity used?

| Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.441[a]	2	.024
Likelihood Ratio	7.378	2	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.386	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	410		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.88.			

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and the type of online identity used (real name, pseudonym, or mixed). The results revealed a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(2, N = 410) = 7.44$, $p = .024$. While the majority of both males and females reported using their real names online, females (81.6%) were more likely than males (70.5%) to do so. Interestingly, males were more likely to use a **mixed identity** (21%) or a **pseudonym** (8.5%) compared to females (12% and 6.4% respectively). These results suggest that males are more inclined than females to hide or vary their identity in online spaces.

Options		2. Your Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Real Name	Count	124	191	315
	Expected Count	135.2	179.8	315.0

		39.4%	60.6%	100.0%
	% within Identity	39.4%	60.6%	100.0%
	% within 2. Your Gender	70.5%	81.6%	76.8%
	% of Total	30.2%	46.6%	76.8%
Pseudonym (Fake name)	Count	15	15	30
	Expected Count	12.9	17.1	30.0
	% within Identity	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within 2. Your Gender	8.5%	6.4%	7.3%
	% of Total	3.7%	3.7%	7.3%
Mixed	Count	37	28	65
	Expected Count	27.9	37.1	65.0
	% within identity	56.9%	43.1%	100.0%
	% within 2. Your Gender	21.0%	12.0%	15.9%
	% of Total	9.0%	6.8%	15.9%
	Count	176	234	410
	Expected Count	176.0	234.0	410.0
	% within identity	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% within 2. Your Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%

The data shows a clear gender difference in the type of identity used by youth in online spaces. Overall, the majority of respondents (**76.8%**) preferred to use their **real names**, with females (**81.6%**) more likely than males (**70.5%**) to present themselves authentically online. A smaller group (**15.9%**) reported using **mixed identities**—a combination of real and fake names—with males (**21.0%**) engaging in this practice more than females (**12.0%**), indicating a higher level of caution or privacy concerns among male users. The use of **pseudonyms** was the least common, accounting for only **7.3%** of respondents, with a slightly higher proportion among males (**8.5%**) compared to females (**6.4%**). These results suggest that while real-name usage dominates among youth, males are more likely to experiment with anonymity or identity blending in digital spaces.

Daily screen time
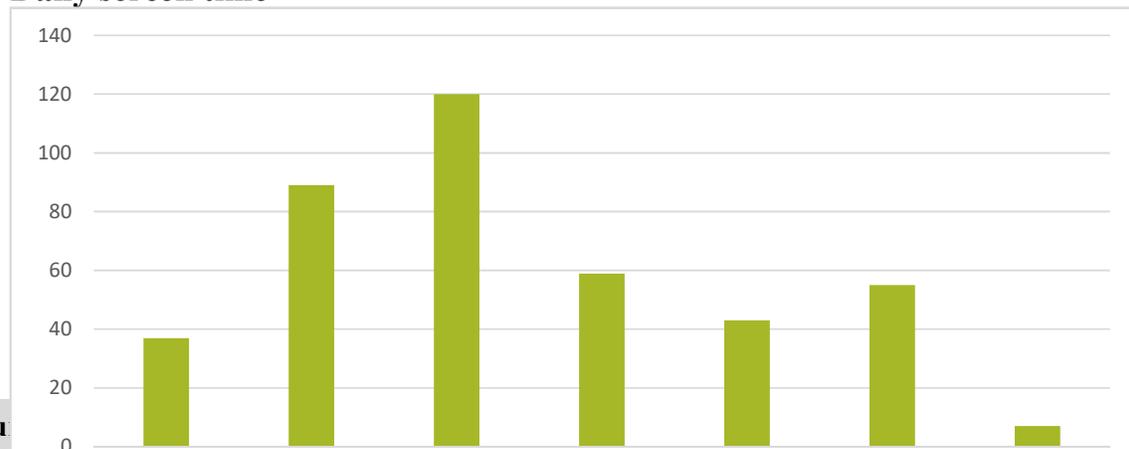
Time spends on social media each day
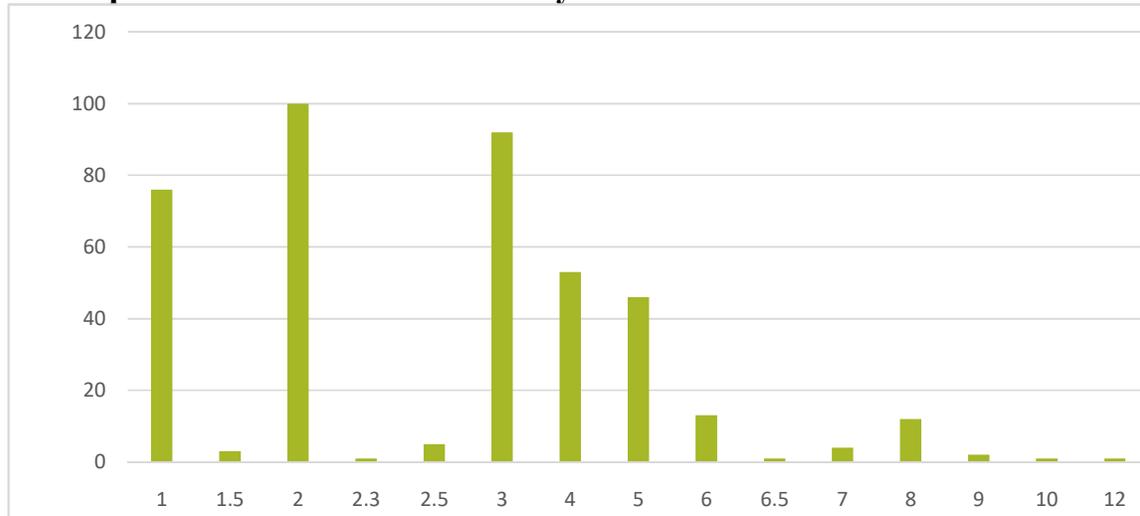
       The analysis of **average daily screen time** and **time spent specifically on social media** reveals interesting usage patterns among respondents. The first chart shows that most participants reported spending **2–3 hours per day** on screens, with a gradual decrease in the number of respondents as screen time increased beyond **4 hours**. Only a small portion indicated spending a very high amount of time on their devices. The second chart focuses on **social media usage**, showing that the majority of respondents spend **2–3 hours daily on social media**, with some extending their usage to **4–5 hours**. A few participants reported extreme usage of **8 or more hours per day**. These findings indicate that while overall screen time is moderately distributed, **social media accounts for a significant portion of daily digital activity**, highlighting its strong presence in the lives of youth and its potential impact on their routines and behaviours.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
On an average, how much time do you spend on social media each	410	1.0	12.0	3.078	1.8116

day? Answer in hourly base						
Valid N (listwise)	410					

The descriptive statistics indicate that out of 410 respondents, the average daily time spent on social media is **3.08 hours**. The minimum reported usage is **1 hour**, while the maximum reaches **12 hours** per day, suggesting a wide range of engagement levels. The **standard deviation of 1.81** reflects moderate variation in participants' social media habits. These findings highlight that, on average, youth dedicate a substantial portion of their day to social media, aligning with the study's objective of assessing its influence on cultural behaviors and communication preferences

Crosstabulation of Gender and Daily Average Screen Time										
			13. What is your daily average screen time?							Total
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Gender	Male	Count	17	35	42	25	20	36	1	176
		% withinGender	9.7%	19.9%	23.9%	14.2%	11.4%	20.5%	0.6%	100.0%
	Female	Count	20	54	78	34	23	19	6	234
		% withinGender	8.5%	23.1%	33.3%	14.5%	9.8%	8.1%	2.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	37	89	120	59	43	55	7	410
		% withinGender	9.0%	21.7%	29.3%	14.4%	10.5%	13.4%	1.7%	100.0%

The crosstabulation of gender and daily average screen time reveals distinct usage patterns between males and females. Both genders most frequently reported spending 2–3 hours on screens, with 23.9% of males and 33.3% of females in this category, followed by the 1–2 hours range (19.9% males, 23.1% females). A notably larger proportion of males (20.5%) reported spending 5 or more hours on screens compared to females (8.1%), indicating higher screen engagement among males. Conversely, females were more represented in moderate screen time categories, suggesting more balanced usage. Extremely high screen time ("I really spend a lot of my time") was rare but slightly more common among females (2.6%) than males (0.6%). Overall, these findings suggest that males tend to exhibit higher screen time in the upper ranges, whereas females concentrate more in moderate screen time categories, highlighting gender differences in screen usage intensity

Correlations

			Age	Daily Screen Time
Spearman's rho	3. What is your age?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.117*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.018
		N	410	410
	13. What is your daily average screen time?	Correlation Coefficient	.117*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.
		N	410	410
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

The Spearman correlation analysis indicates a small but statistically significant positive correlation between age and daily average screen time (rho = 0.117, p = 0.018). This suggests that as age increases, there is a slight tendency for daily screen time to increase among the participants. However, the strength of the relationship is weak, indicating other factors may also influence screen time.

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Daily time spend on social media daily	Male	176	3.232	1.9549	.1474
	Female	234	2.962	1.6909	.1105

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the average daily time spent on social media between males and females. Males reported a slightly higher mean usage (M = 3.23 hours, SD = 1.95) compared to females (M = 2.96 hours, SD = 1.69). However, this difference was not statistically significant, t(408) = 1.498, p = 0.135, indicating that gender does not have a significant effect on daily social media usage in this sample. The assumption of equal variances was met, as indicated by Levene's test, p = 0.148.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper

| Average time spent on social media daily | Equal variances assumed | 2.101 | 0.148 | 1.498 | 408 | 0.135 | 0.2703 | 0.1805 | -0.0845 | 0.6251 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.467 | 345.248 | 0.143 | 0.2703 | 0.1842 | -0.0920 | 0.6326 |

12. Do you adapt global trends (e.g., fashion, slang) to fit your local culture?

Options		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	146	35.6	35.6
	No	111	27.1	62.7
	Sometimes	153	37.3	100.0
	Total	410	100.0	

As the Bar Chart and Pie Chart demonstrate that a significant proportion of youth are influenced by global trends through social media. According to the data, 37.3% of respondents reported sometimes adapting global trends such as fashion and slang to fit their local culture, while 35.6% confirmed that they do adapt these trends. In contrast, only 27.1% stated that they do not adapt global trends. The pie chart further illustrates that nearly three-quarters (72.9%) of respondents show at least some level of adaptation, highlighting the prevalence of global cultural influence.
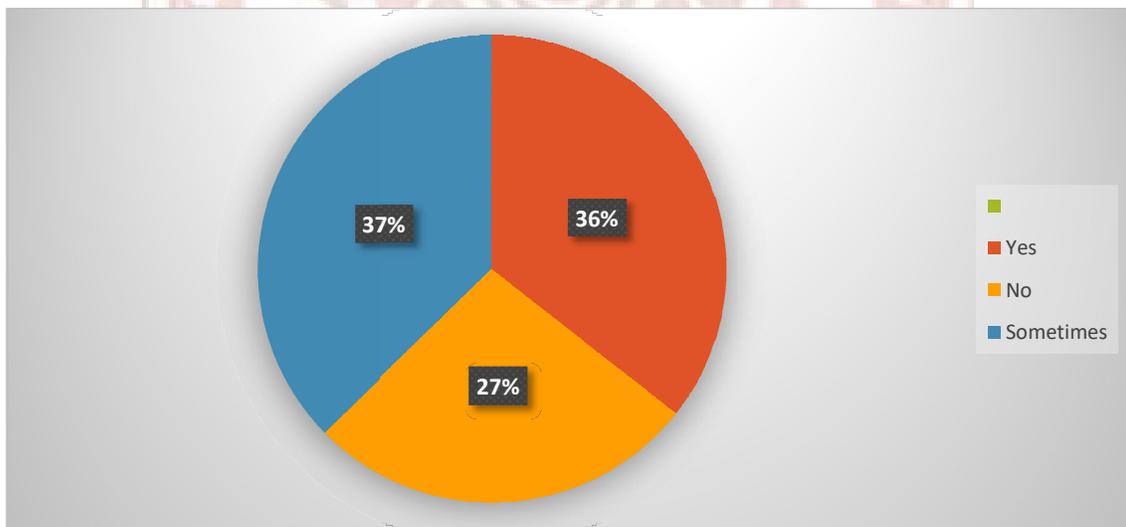
These results provide empirical support for the hypothesis (H1) that social media usage significantly impacts the cultural behaviours and practices of youth in Surat City. The bar and pie charts visually underscore this cultural shift, indicating that social media plays a central role in integrating global cultural patterns into local practices.

Global Trends adaptation by Youth	Your Gender	Total

			Male	Female	
Global Trends adaptation by Youth	Yes	Count	57	89	146
		% within Gender	32.4%	38.0%	35.6%
	No	Count	54	57	111
		% within Gender	30.7%	24.4%	27.1%
	Sometimes	Count	65	88	153
		% within Gender	36.9%	37.6%	37.3%
Total		Count	176	234	410
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The crosstabulation between gender and adaptation of global trends (fashion, slang) shows that among males, 32.4% reported adapting global trends, 30.7% reported not adapting them, and 36.9% reported sometimes adapting them, while among females, 38.0% reported adapting global trends, 24.4% reported not adapting them, and 37.6% reported sometimes adapting them. Although descriptive results suggest slightly higher adaptation among females compared to males, the overall distribution patterns are relatively similar. The Chi-Square test results ($\chi^2 = 2.395$, df = 2, p = .302) indicate that the relationship between gender and adaptation of global trends is not statistically significant (p > 0.05). This implies that both male and female respondents adapt global trends in similar proportions, and gender does not play a significant role in shaping this behaviour. Consequently, the findings suggest that the adaptation of global trends is a common cultural phenomenon among youth regardless of gender, reinforcing the argument that social media-driven cultural influences transcend demographic boundaries and are shared across youth population.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.395[a]	2	.302
Likelihood Ratio	2.390	2	.303
Linear-by-Linear Association	.340	1	.560
N of Valid Cases	410		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 47.65.

13. Have you adopted any cultural practices (e.g., food, clothing, slang) because of social media?

A frequency analysis was conducted to assess the self-reported adoption of cultural practices influenced by social media among youth. Based on the data presented in the

frequency distribution table, the results indicate that half of the respondents (50.0%, n = 205) reported having adopted cultural practices such as those related to food, clothing, or slang due to social media. A significant minority of respondents denied such adoption (39.0%, n = 160), while a smaller portion responded with uncertainty ("I don't think so"; 11.0%, n = 45).

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	205	50.0
	No	160	39.0
	I don't think so	45	11.0
	Total	410	100.0

Cross-Tabulation of Daily Social Media Usage and Perceived Impact on Offline Cultural Participation					
		Yes	No	I think somehow	Total
1-2 Hours	Count	33	31	14	78
	% within daily time spent on social media	42.3%	39.7%	17.9%	100.0%
2-4 Hours	Count	33	45	28	106
	% within daily time spent on social media	31.1%	42.5%	26.4%	100.0%
4-6 Hours	Count	56	57	40	153
	% within daily time spent on social media	36.6%	37.3%	26.1%	100.0%
7+ Hours	Count	20	35	17	72
	% within daily time spent on social media	27.8%	48.6%	23.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	142	168	99	409
	% within daily time spent on social media	34.7%	41.1%	24.2%	100.0%

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was performed to assess the relationship between daily social media usage and its perceived impact on participation in offline cultural events. The analysis, which categorized social media use into four duration groups (1–2 hours, 2–4 hours, 4–6 hours, and 7+ hours), revealed no statistically significant association, $\chi^2(6, N = 409) = 6.19$, $p = .403$. This indicates that the amount of time youth spend on social media is not significantly linked to their perception of whether it affects their involvement in offline cultural activities such as festivals and family gatherings. Consequently, the null

hypothesis is retained, suggesting that, within this sample, time spent on social media does not appear to influence perceived changes in offline cultural participation.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.187[a]	6	.403
Likelihood Ratio	6.262	6	.394
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.722	1	.189
N of Valid Cases	409		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.43.			

A descriptive analysis of mean ranks was conducted to ascertain the primary motivations for social media use among youth. The analysis revealed that the most significant reason was **"To search for news and updates"** (M = 2.78), followed closely by **"To learn about fashion and beauty"** (M = 2.86). In contrast, the least significant motivation reported was **"To find new friends/ a romantic partner"** (M = 3.88). These findings indicate that for the surveyed youth, social media functions primarily as an **informational and utility tool** for staying informed and learning about trends, rather than as a medium for initiating new social relationships.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Share your opinions or thoughts	410	1	6	3.13	1.731
Express your emotions and feelings	410	1	6	3.39	1.737
For online group communication (e.g. organizing events)	410	1	6	3.21	1.697
To find new friends/ a romantic partner	410	1	6	3.88	1.891
To deal with loneliness, boredom	410	1	6	3.48	1.780
To search for news and updates	410	1	6	2.78	1.547
To learn about fashion and beauty	410	1	6	2.86	1.665
Valid N (listwise)	410				

A Friedman test (Figure 12) revealed a statistically significant difference in the ranked importance of various reasons for social media use among youth ($\chi^2(6) = 114.37$, $p < .001$). Analysis of mean ranks indicated that the most significant motivations were "to search for news and updates" (Mean Rank = 3.57) and "to learn about fashion and beauty" (Mean Rank = 3.59), whereas the least important were "to find new friends/a romantic partner" (Mean Rank = 4.71) and "to deal with loneliness, boredom" (Mean Rank = 4.26). These findings indicate that youth primarily utilize social media for informational purposes and

trend discovery rather than for social compensation or relationship-seeking, highlighting its role as a tool for cultural and informational engagement rather than core social interaction.

Figure 12:

Friedman Test	
	Mean Rank
Share your opinions or thoughts	3.80
Express your emotions and feelings	4.18
For online group communication (e.g. organizing events)	3.89
To find new friends/ a romantic partner	4.71
To deal with loneliness, boredom	4.26
To search for news and updates	3.57
To learn about fashion and beauty	3.59

A series of Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to evaluate potential gender differences in the ranked importance of motivations for social media use. The analysis revealed statistically significant gender differences for two of the seven reasons.

Reason for Using social media	Males Mean Rank (N=176)	Females Mean Rank (N=234)	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Significant?
To find new friends/ a romantic partner	184.74	221.12	16937.50	.002	**Yes** (F > M)
To learn about fashion and beauty	225.82	190.22	17016.00	.002	**Yes** (M > F)
For online group communication	192.76	215.08	18349.50	.054	No
To search for news and updates	217.97	196.12	18396.50	.059	No
Share your opinions or thoughts	197.80	211.29	19236.00	.244	No
Express your emotions and feelings	199.03	210.37	19453.50	.330	No
To deal with loneliness, boredom	211.44	201.03	19546.50	.369	No

Females assigned significantly greater importance to using social media "to find new friends/ a romantic partner" than males (U = 16937.50, *p* = .002). Conversely, males ranked the motivation "to learn about fashion and beauty" as significantly more important than females (U = 17016.00, *p* = .002). No significant gender differences were found for the remaining

five motivations, including sharing opinions, expressing emotions, online group communication, searching for news, and dealing with loneliness (*p* > .05 for all). These results indicate that while both genders primarily use social media for similar informational and communicative purposes, key divergences exist in social and aesthetic motivations, suggesting gendered patterns in the psychosocial functions of social media engagement.

Descriptive Statistics					
Options	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I think I have less face-to-face communication due to social media use.	409	1	5	3.22	1.389
Social media sometimes causes to have conflicts with family or friends.	409	1	5	3.25	1.232
Technology advancement is harming face-to-face communication.	409	1	5	3.38	1.140
Online relationships fulfil my social needs as much as in-person interactions.	409	1	5	2.71	1.377
I believe offline activities can't be replaced by social media.	409	1	5	3.47	1.229
When with friends, we often spend more time on our phones than talking to each other.	409	1	5	3.00	1.287
Valid N (listwise)	409				

Descriptive statistics were computed to assess perceptions of social media's impact on communication and culture. The analysis revealed a nuanced set of beliefs among respondents. Participants tended to agree that technological advancement is harming face-to-face communication (M = 3.38, SD = 1.14) and that offline activities cannot be replaced by social media (M = 3.47, SD = 1.23). There was moderate agreement with the statements that social media use reduces face-to-face interaction (M = 3.22, SD = 1.39) and sometimes causes conflicts with family or friends (M = 3.25, SD = 1.23). Respondents were neutral regarding whether they spend more time on their phones than talking when with friends (M = 3.00, SD = 1.29). In contrast, they disagreed with the notion that online relationships fulfill their social needs as much as in-person interactions (M = 2.71, SD = 1.38). These findings suggest that while youth acknowledge the negative impacts of social media on traditional

communication, they still value and perceive face-to-face interactions as irreplaceable for fulfilling core social needs.

Statement	M	SD	t	df	p
1. Technology advancement is harming face-to-face communication.	3.38	1.14	6.77	408	<.001
2. Offline activities cannot be replaced by social media.	3.47	1.23	7.81	408	<.001
3. Social media sometimes causes conflicts with family or friends.	3.25	1.23	4.17	408	<.001
4. I have less face-to-face communication due to social media use.	3.22	1.39	3.17	408	.002
5. When with friends, we spend more time on phones than talking.	3.00	1.29	0.00	408	1.000
6. Online relationships fulfill my social needs as much as in-person.	2.71	1.38	-4.24	408	<.001

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation. Degrees of freedom (df) are 408 for all tests. The test value is 3 (the scale midpoint). A significant p-value ($p < .05$) indicates the mean is significantly different from Neutral.

Results and Discussion

This study examined the impact of social media on the cultural behaviors and communication preferences of youth in Surat City. The findings provide nuanced insights into how digital platforms are reshaping youth culture, identity, and social interaction within an urban Indian context.

Cultural Influence of Social Media

The results strongly support the alternative hypothesis (H1) that social media usage significantly impacts cultural behaviors. Half of the respondents (50%) reported adopting cultural practices related to food, clothing, or slang due to social media exposure, while only 39% denied such influence. This adoption rate demonstrates social media's powerful role as a cultural conduit, facilitating the globalization of local practices and the localization of global trends. Notably, 37.3% of youth "sometimes" adapt global trends to fit local contexts, indicating a complex process of cultural negotiation rather than mere imitation. This finding aligns with Shah's (2024) observation that social media serves as both a news source and a platform for cultural discussion and exchange.

The absence of significant gender differences in cultural adaptation suggests that social media's cultural influence transcends traditional demographic boundaries, creating a shared cultural experience among youth regardless of gender. This universal influence underscores the platform's role as an equalizing force in cultural dissemination.

Communication Preferences and Social Dynamics

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the study revealed that youth have not abandoned face-to-face communication for online interaction. While respondents acknowledged that technology advancement is harming traditional communication (M=3.38) and that they have less face-to-face interaction due to social media (M=3.22), they strongly disagreed that online relationships fulfill their social needs as much as in-person interactions (M=2.71). This paradox suggests that while youth recognize social media's encroachment on traditional communication, they still value authentic personal connections.

Gender differences emerged in specific communication aspects. Males were significantly more likely to prefer discussing personal problems with online friends rather than parents (p=.010) and expressed stronger preference for relationships over marriage influenced by social media (p=.001). This indicates that social media provides males with alternative emotional support systems and influences their relationship attitudes more profoundly than females.

Motivations and Engagement Patterns

The Friedman test revealed significant differences in social media motivations ($\chi^2(6)=114.37$, p<.001). Youth primarily use social media for informational purposes ("search for news and updates," Mean Rank=3.57) and trend discovery ("learn about fashion and beauty," Mean Rank=3.59) rather than for social compensation or relationship-seeking. This utilitarian approach contrasts with findings from Western contexts where social connectivity often dominates usage patterns.

Gender-specific motivations were particularly revealing. Females placed greater importance on using social media for finding new friends/romantic partners (p=.002), while males prioritized learning about fashion and beauty (p=.002). This reversal of traditional gender stereotypes suggests social media is enabling new forms of gender expression and social exploration among Indian youth.

Behavioral Impacts and Cultural Integration

The high prevalence of real-name usage (76.8%) indicates that most youth maintain authentic identities online, though males were more likely to use mixed identities or pseudonyms (p=.024). This authenticity in online presentation facilitates genuine cultural exchange but also makes youth vulnerable to the platforms' influences on self-concept and values, a concern raised by Shi (2023) regarding social media's impact on identity formation.

The moderate average daily usage (3.08 hours) suggests balanced engagement rather than addiction, though the significant portion spending 4+ hours daily (25.9%) indicates a vulnerable subgroup potentially experiencing greater cultural and behavioral impacts.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

These findings support the concept of social media as a "cultural accelerator" that both spreads global trends and facilitates their local adaptation. The platforms serve as cultural laboratories where youth experiment with identities and practices before integrating them into offline lives.

Practically, educators and policymakers should recognize social media's dual role as both cultural disruptor and enabler. While it threatens traditional communication patterns, it also provides new avenues for cultural expression and social connection. Initiatives should focus on digital literacy that emphasizes critical consumption of cultural content and maintenance of offline social skills.

Conclusion

Social media has undoubtedly become a powerful force shaping youth culture in Surat City, influencing everything from fashion choices to communication patterns. However, rather than simply replacing traditional culture with globalized digital culture, youth are engaging in sophisticated cultural negotiation—adopting, adapting, and rejecting elements in ways that create a unique hybrid culture. This process maintains core values of authentic connection while embracing new forms of expression and interaction. The challenge for educators, parents, and policymakers is to guide this cultural negotiation toward healthy outcomes that preserve meaningful human connection while embracing positive cultural evolution.

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