



The Effect of Social Media in Cross Cultural Communication--A Case Study on The New Generation of India

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Abstract

Cultures are models of life with a set of fundamental traits. Cultures are acquired, shared, dynamic, multifaceted, and overlapped. Many unanticipated events may occur whenever a person is placed in novel setting and surroundings. Thus, in today's globalized world, understanding many cultures has become essential. Understanding other cultures becomes increasingly crucial in all areas of human communication. Intercultural distinctions are too important to overlook in this day of globalization. This is becoming a normal part of our daily existence. Gaining an understanding of the language, cultures, etiquette, and people of another nation not only promotes friendship and worldwide business communication, but it also helps to forge connections between various communities around the globe.

The media in this era of knowledge is crucial in forming a civilized society because of its rich cultural heritage and consistent character. The media landscape is about to undergo even more drastic change in the modern day. And it has an impact on human society both directly and indirectly. Social media is the one that will transform human communication the most out of all the media. Furthermore, social networking sites, or SNSs, have gained enormous popularity. Social media has multiple meanings and denotes a wide range of subjects. In general, it refers to an aggregative set of user-driven web properties. As an illustration, consider blogs, message boards, dating websites, and websites that share videos. The current trend of social media optimization, or SMO, is the process of attempting to increase the distribution of one's information across a variety of social media networks. The Internet, the medium via which all of the aforementioned activity is conducted, is devoid of the mediating barriers of time, space, gender, religion, and several other divides that exist between men. It is also devoid of the boundaries of education, experience, intelligence, and morality. These networks, often known as "friend-of-a-friend" sites, are based on the idea of conventional social networks, in which users connect with new people through acquaintances. Some networking sites may be solely social, enabling users to form love or friendship bonds, while others might be more focused on helping users connect with businesses.

Millions of people have visited social network sites (SNSs) including Facebook, My Space, Cy-world, and Bebe since they first launched; many of them have made frequent use of these platforms. Hundreds of SNSs are networking globally now, utilizing a variety of technological advancements. While the developed world is still struggling with the moral, creative and regulatory issues regarding these social media, other countries, are embracing them uninhibited and with lightning speed. This paper examines the socio-cultural norms of SNS in both the countries, the current scenario of cybercrimes relating to SNS in India and in Oman. And a comparative study between Oman and India will be carried out on the effects of the SNS usages on the youths (aged from 18 to 25) through the use of surveys, questionnaires and interviews.

Keywords: Social Media, Digital Technologies, Social Network Sites, Cross Cultural Communication, New Generation, Oman and India.

1. INTRODUCTION

These days, social media is ubiquitous and plays a significant role in daily life. People use social media for a variety of purposes, including emailing, shopping, commerce, and education. It is quickly becoming an indispensable element of modern life. The way individuals utilize social media has a big impact on their life. Some examples of social media sites where users can easily connect with each other are blogs and social networking sites. From the moment Facebook and Twitter became essential tools for newsgathering, journalists and their organizations have been walking on eggshells. Lots of people go to these spots. " Electronic resources that are both affordable and publicly available, enabling anybody to post



and access information, collaborate on a project, or build relationships." That pretty well sums up social media. There were 70 million and 98.2 million Indian users aged 18 to 24 on Instagram and Facebook, respectively.

Researchers are currently investigating the societal implications of social media as a result of the growing focus on social media over the last quarter of a century. Although nearly everyone in the neighbourhood has a social media account, the most active and dedicated users tend to be children and teenagers. Authorities in this area assert that children's moral development, conduct, and academic achievement are negatively impacted by their usage of these social media platforms. Teens and younger children can use social media to have fun, find others who share their interests, and learn more about themselves and their family relationships. This is a natural progression from their earlier real-life and virtual exchanges. For older teens, it's a major factor in how they interact with friends and other social groups. The survey found that 86 percent of non-adult users in India have access to cellphones. Nearly eighty-five percent report using social media, and the majority spend five hours daily online.

The use of over-the-top (OTT) providers to access video content outside of YouTube is on the rise among young people. In the first half of the epidemic, social media usage increased by 70% while user engagement on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook increased by 45%. This clearly shows that the reliance has grown in such a brief period. There are pros and cons to the way young people utilize social media nowadays. The target audience for this research is young Indians, and the aim is to illuminate the effects of social media in particular on this demographic. These outcomes may have positive or negative impacts.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate how social media affects Indian young, ages 18 to 25, in their cross-cultural communication.
- To recognize and contrast the difficulties arising from cultural preconceptions and misinterpretations on social media between Oman and India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ozukum, T. (2021) intended to increase consciousness and awareness while assisting in the conscientization and mobilization of individuals for group action. India is a promising avenue for researching the effects of religious tolerance on social media due to its diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, as a secular nation, India supports each citizen's inherent right to practice their own religion. However, secularism in India does not imply irreligion; rather, it refers to respect for all religions. To put it another way, the fundamental tenet of all Indian religious teachings is non-discrimination based on religious differences. Nonetheless, greater polarizing intercommunal tensions were brought about by political parties' adherence to religious dogma throughout India's political history. Nowadays, religious ideas are spread through social media, which has increased religious intolerance and sparked rioting among communities. Tension has arisen between various religious communities and institutions as a result of the rise of religious fanaticism. As a result, the nature and scope of social media sites and networks, as well as the difficulties associated with religious tolerance in them, have been highlighted. Additionally, according to research on social media analysis, new communication channels have established the groundwork for social media tools, which are essentially a continuation and reinforcement of participatory communication.

Olaniran, B. A. (2018) determined the various factors influencing social media uptake and usage in developing markets. In order to identify the various elements that affect social media use in developing markets and less economically developed nations, a review of the literature was used in this study. The terms "social media" and "emerging markets" were included in the chosen literature. The analysis's breadth was constrained by the use of the term "culture." The investigation sheds light on how several factors, including gender, literacy, communication preferences, context, culture, and trust, influence how people utilize social



media inside developing market businesses and organizations. Specifically, the study recommends that all social media campaigns consider cultural factors that are significant for prospective consumers who will connect with social networks in developing countries. It's possible that the literature review was incomplete. As a result, several pertinent research might have been disregarded because they didn't include the right keywords. Moreover, there aren't enough published research on social media usage in emerging markets at this time to thoroughly investigate the subject. Consequently, a request for additional mixed-method empirical study will yield a more thorough analysis.

Bala, K. (2014) set out to investigate how the tech-savvy youth of the modern period had changed the way they talk to one another. Some have argued that new media have caused significant changes to the nature and style of interpersonal, group, and intrapersonal communication. There was a time when established news outlets set the pace for public discourse by monitoring social media for breaking stories. Media has become more interactive but less genuine in terms of substance as a result of new media's increased interactivity and the absence of a suitable content control authority. Youth are not leading ethical lives, but rather virtual lives in the virtual world. The study looks at how interpersonal communication on public platforms is altering societal roles that are more prone to breaking due to new media. Young people feel alienated in the real world among the hundreds of thousands of people they have become friends with on social media. The author concludes that a new type of social order is emerging in the age of overcommunication, one that is enhancing mass and public communication while decreasing intimate communication.

Ijabadeniyi, A. (2015) examined the differences in culture between Indians and Africans in Durban, South Africa, using commercial communication as a basis. There is a dearth of cross-cultural marketing research in Africa, despite the fact that it has mostly focused on Western and Eastern countries. Based on an adaptation of the individualism-collectivism cultural component to account for cultural values relevant to marketing communication, the study looks at the cultural values of Africans and Indians (MCSCV). The study was a quantitative one that recruited participants using a judgmental sampling strategy and utilized the t-test to examine the data. In the main commercial centers of two of Durban's well-known African and Indian townships, Umlazi and Chatsworth, respectively, 283 African and 92 Indian respondents filled out surveys. In contrast to their African counterparts, Indian respondents to the survey shown more individualistic inclinations towards marketing communication. The study emphasizes that indigenous cultural values of target audiences might not always be a reliable indicator of market segmentation. The study also demonstrates that, without first determining whether the two cultural settings are compatible, stereotyped marketing communication tactics may be harmfully directed towards culturally homogeneous audiences based on indigenous cultural inclinations.

Rodrigues, U. M. (2019) stayed mostly away from the mainstream media, communicating with the public through public rallies and his social media sites. This paper uses Modi's Twitter statements during the three months after the demonetization announcement to illustrate this style of direct communication. The prime minister of India has recently placed an emphasis on direct connection on social media platforms through the mediatization of political discourse, and we look at the consequences of this shift in mass communication away from traditional news outlets. He and his party used online tools and social media during the 2014 and 2019 elections to reach out to educated, young, middle-class Indian voters. Modi's approach to political communication after his historic victory in the 2014 elections has been to rely less on traditional news outlets and more on social media and official websites to update supporters on his daily activities and policy announcements. Even during a crucial policy shift, this direct communication approach was used. In November 2016, midway through Modi's five-year term as prime minister, his government took the politically bold decision to destroy more than 85% of India's currency notes.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A mixed-methods approach has been adopted in the study combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This approach would clearly give account of not only statistical trends but also human experiences in-depth, thereby providing balance in the understanding of the effects of social media on cross-cultural communication.

3.2. Data Collection Methods

The study uses three approaches for the purpose of understanding how social media affects the cross-cultural communication among Indian youth. Online structured surveys collect both quantitative data regarding the usage, cultural attitudes, and demand for social media among the respondents. This is supplemented by Likert-scale and open-ended survey questions through which an effective amount of input can be gathered regarding how social media functions in cross-cultural contact from a selection of the respondents of the survey. Video conversations or in-person meetings with people provide qualitative insight into their experiences on social media and cross-cultural communication. Recorded interviews are then transcribed and analyzed.

3.3. Sample Selection

The procedure for sample selection is framed to ensure all-inclusive as well as accurate analysis. The sample for the survey comprises 100 respondents in the age group of 18-25 years from various parts of India. They have been chosen by a stratified form of random selection so that they geographically represent all kinds of places, educationally have different kinds of educational backgrounds, and socially reflect a wide range of social media usage. Because they were willing to give detailed responses, 50 respondents are chosen for this category and they are selected for a questionnaire sample which would focus upon a wide range of social media usage patterns and experiences. In the last instance, an intentional selecting technique has been adopted to pick a sample of interview subjects from the questionnaire phase with 20 interview subjects. This sample contains respondents with different levels of experience interacting with people from other cultures on social media. This methodology ensures comprehensive and holistic research of the research goals.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis will be done both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, in the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics are used to summarize cross-cultural experiences on social media usage patterns and misunderstandings, while inferential statistics, such as chi-square and t-tests, are used to establish if the differences are statistically significant and if relationship exists. Qualitative analysis is thorough research into personal narratives to find out from individual viewpoints how social media influences cross-cultural communication, as well as thematic analysis of the interview transcripts on existence of recurring themes.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

It was conducted with 100 respondents aged between 18 to 25 years. The rest of this analysis will focus on experiences of communication, cultural views, and trends of usage of social media.

4.1. Patterns of Social Media Usage

The frequency and average daily usage of the different social media sites of the respondents are reported in the table below:

Table 1: Patterns of Social Media Usage

Platform	Percentage of Users	Average Daily Usage (hours)
Facebook	85%	1.8
Instagram	90%	2.3
Twitter	60%	1.2
LinkedIn	45%	0.8
Snapchat	55%	1.5

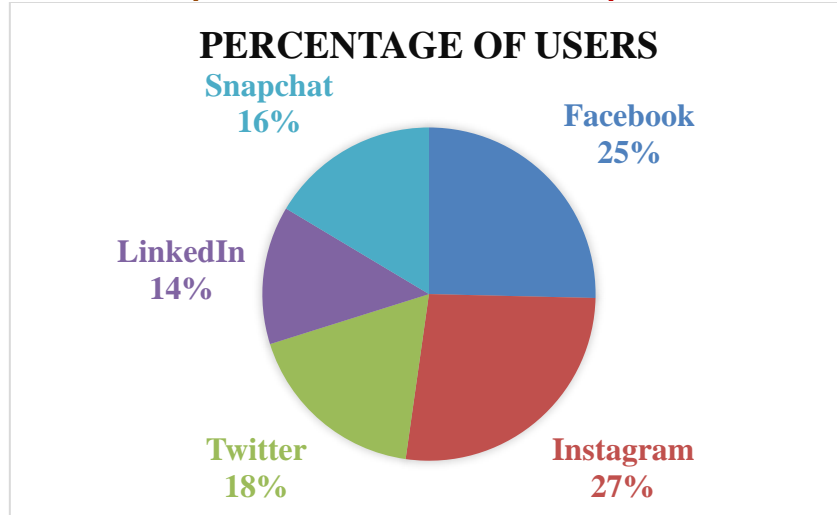


Figure 1: Social Media Usage Patterns

Table 1 illustrates the trend of social media usage among the respondents in terms of their usage each day and the popularity of each platform among most of the respondents. It appears there is definitely a penetration of social media into each of the respondents' lives, starting with Instagram at 90% with an average use of 2.3 hours of every day. Facebook is the second most used network, and with an average of 1.8 hours per day it reaches 85% of respondents, still very relevant in these times, when new social media networks are emerging. Other social networks, which are used by less than half of the surveyed people, are Twitter and LinkedIn with averages of 1.2 and 1.5 hours per day, respectively, and LinkedIn is the least utilized one, with merely an average of 0.8 hours per day. Such a distribution further illustrates the dominance of Instagram and may suggest that although Facebook is still the dominant platform, users spend much more incidental time with other social media, including Twitter, LinkedIn, and Snapchat.

4.2. Impact on Cross-Cultural Communication

Table 2: Views of Social Media's Influence on Intercultural Communication

Aspect	Percentage of Respondents
Enhanced cultural sensitivity	78%
Better cross-cultural relations	70%
Greater diversity appreciation	65%
Experienced cultural stereotypes	40%
Intercultural miscommunication	35%

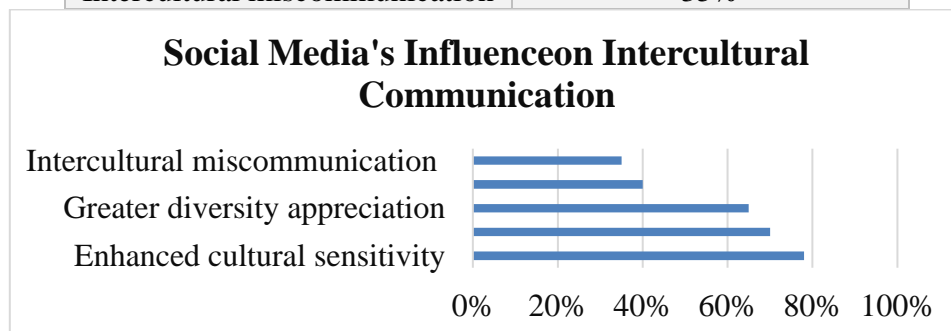


Figure 2: Views of Social Media's Influence on Intercultural Communication

Table 2 Depicting respondents' perceptions about the role of social media on intercultural communication A total of 78 percent of respondents assert that social media fosters cultural knowledge, and 70 percent think that social media enhances cross-cultural relationship. From these findings, it seems that social media is perceived positively since it helps enhance international relationships. Moreover, 65 percent of the respondents claim that exposure to social media has made them enjoy diversity more. On the other hand, 40% of respondents revealed facing cultural preconceptions, and 35% reported facing cultural misunderstandings,

thus underlining specific challenges associated with cross-cultural communication. Such findings assert that actually, the belief does exist that social media widens the scope for cross-cultural understanding and interaction. However, there are problems associated with stereotypes and miscommunication that would have to be handled so that the level of cross-cultural communication could be improved.

4.3. Social Media Platforms' Function

Table 3: Social Media Sites' Function

Platform	Respondents' Percentage Saying It's Effective for Cultural Exchange
Facebook	70%
Instagram	75%
Twitter	55%
LinkedIn	45%
Snapchat	60%

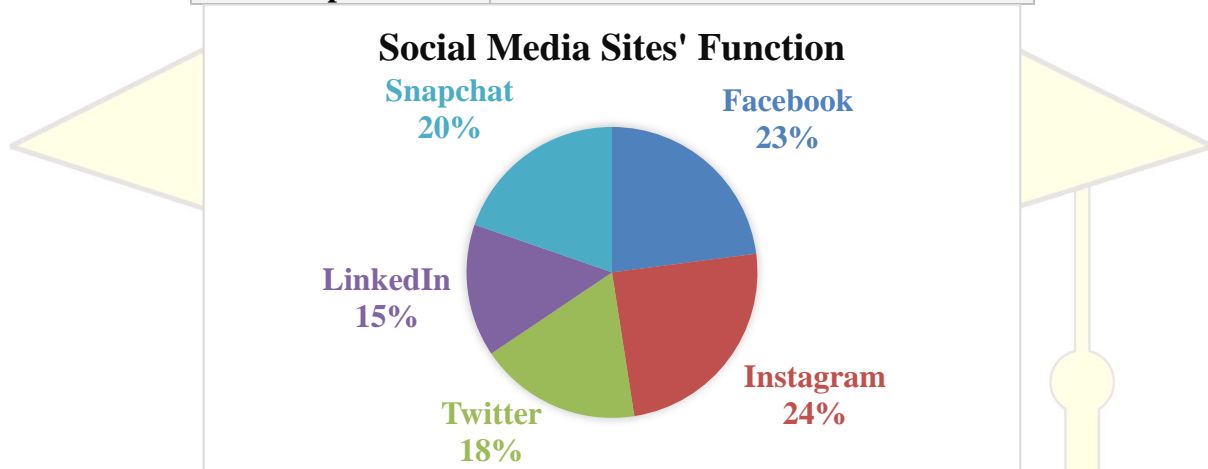


Figure 3: Social Media Sites' Function

As the respondents have indicated, Table 3 provides information on the various social media sites that benefit cross-cultural exchange. Instagram is the leading site used to facilitate cross-cultural contact according to 75% of its users, followed by Facebook at 70% of its users both of which play a highly significant role in bridging cultural gaps. Notable also is Snapchat, considered effective by 60% of the respondents. Twitter and LinkedIn contribute 55% and 45% of the influence, respectively. Among social media, usually, improvements in cultural understanding are noted in both countries, but based on data from Oman found in a comparative research, Indian levels of cultural stereotypes and miscommunication have seemed marginally higher. This contrast brings out the need to tailor interventions in India specifically to address these issues and further enhance the general effectiveness of social media as a facilitator of intercultural dialogue.

4.4. Comparative Data

Table 4: Comparative Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Communication

Effect	India (%)	Oman (%)
Social networking enhances intercultural comprehension	78%	82%
International friendships are fostered by social media	65%	70%
Social networking causes cultural misunderstandings	35%	30%
Coming across cultural preconceptions	40%	38%

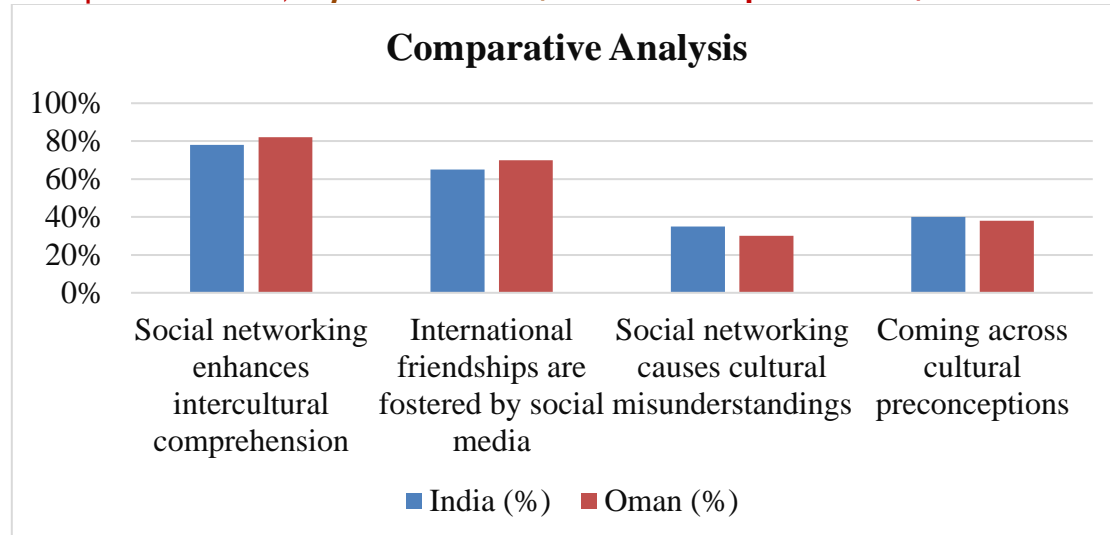


Figure 4: Comparative Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media on Intercultural Communication

Table 4 reports an analysis of the effect of social media on intercultural communication in India and Oman. While both countries evidence a positive impact of social media on cultural awareness, the difference is somewhat higher in Oman at 82% than in India at 78%. International friendships also become much easier through social media, especially according to 65% of Indians and 70% of Omanis. However, India experienced relatively more confrontation with cultural prejudices at 40% than Oman at 38% and the incidence of cultural miscommunication relatively higher at 35% than Oman at 30%. This implies that though social media relations have improved cross-cultural interactions, Oman and India, stereotypes and miscommunications are more serious issues in India, hence the need for improvement in managing problems.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, the study on cross-cultural communication of the youth of India through social media emphasizes that social media can make a huge difference in cultural differences among nations and foster global relationships. It has been found from the study that an overwhelming number of young respondents believe social media can assist in cross-cultural communication and cultural sensitivity. Most users of these platforms mark that they are more aware of the value of diversity, which makes them particularly effective at promoting cross-cultural interaction. At the same time, though, the study uncovers problems that point to the well-known problems of cross-cultural relationships in this digital age, such as the prevalence of cultural biases and misinterpretations. By comparing India and Oman, it will show that though both nations understand the significance of social media, cross-cultural understanding between both nations is slightly more restrained by preconceptions and cultural misinterpretation in India.

The outcome, therefore, indicates the involvement of some techniques to overcome these problems and enhance the general efficiency of social media in promoting cross-cultural communication. Clearly, it declares the two-faced character of social media as a tool of bridge as well as a barrier in cross-cultural contacts, dwelling more on the importance of understanding and negotiating cultural differences in this increasingly interconnected world.

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