



Role of Facebook groups in Gratification of Social and Psychological needs of Females

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the role of Facebook groups in Social and Psychological need gratification among females. The main objective of this study was to see weather face book groups gratify social (Belongingness, Self-presentation) and Psychological (Usefulness, Enjoyment) needs of females. Data was collected from the sample of (N=500) female group members. A comparison of the difference of perceived gratification of both (Social and Psychological) needs on the basis of age was also done. Findings of Independent sample t-test revealed the difference in gratification of needs among young (15 to 24 years) and adult (25 to 36 years) females. A significant role of facebook groups in gratifying social and psychological needs of females. Psychological need of Usefulness was more significantly found to be gratified (M=21.6) among females through face book groups. For adult females face book groups were more helpful in gratifying their social needs (N=500, $p < 0.5$, $t = -8.37$, $SD = 4.4$) whereas young females found face book groups useful in gratifying their psychological needs (N=500, $p < 0.5$ ($t = 3.5$, $SD = 2.6$). These results revealed collectively an effective role of Facebook groups in gratification of social and psychological needs among females.

Keywords: Face book groups, Social needs, Psychological needs, Females, Need gratification

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INTRODUCTION

Facebook as a social networking site is becoming popular in all segment of population. The number of monthly active users of Facebook is 2,230,000,000 (Clement, 2019). In 2019 the number of Facebook population was 55.4 percent of females, and 44.6 percent of users were male. Globally, females are greater users of social media than men (McPherson, 2016). There are two main ways for users to express themselves on Facebook. The first is Facebook groups and the second is Facebook Pages. Facebook groups provides an umbrella service which offers a toolkit of features, users will select features that they believe will best meet their needs (Smock et al, 2011). In October 2010 people created more than 50 million groups on Facebook after the six months of launching Facebook groups (Moreno et al, 2011).

Females excessively join facebook groups (Chagnai, 2016). It's a big social platform which reduces all potential threats of females. Categories of some social Facebook groups are relationship groups, parental groups, educational groups, Entrepreneur groups. Similarly some Psychological Facebook groups include self-grooming groups, healthy life style groups etc. (Gruber, 2019). Facebook groups are becoming more popular among females in Pakistan after every two weeks over 3,000 females are reported to join different groups, from all over Pakistan but a lot from other parts of the world as well (Chagnai, 2016). The growing interest to use Facebook group in Pakistan has drawn some hypothesis regarding their social and psychological needs. The fast growth of Facebook groups as well as their increased usage among females in Pakistan suggests that this medium has more attractiveness for females beyond traditional means of communication.

Prior research on Facebook mostly focused on Facebook usage in regard of gender differences, specific Facebook pages, specific Facebook closed groups and in different studies effects and benefits of Facebook have been also addressed. However, limited research have been conducted to highlight the social and psychological needs which may urge female to use Facebook groups. The current study is an attempt to fill this gap by investigating the role of Facebook groups in gratifying social needs of belongingness and self-presentation (Facebook dual factor model, 2012) and psychological needs i.e enjoyment and usefulness (Motivation theory, 1943) of female members. The need of belongingness is associated with a desire to make affiliations with others for social acceptance. The continuous intension of impression management refers to self-presentation (Nadkarni & Hofman, 2012). The enjoyment refers to adopting a behaviour which satisfy individual rather than for some separable consequences that may be anticipated. On other hand usefulness refers to do something because person believes would enhance his or her performance (Davis, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The study will be significant in understanding the social and psychological needs of females for Facebook usage. Media practitioners will find a way to understand how existing social platforms like facebook groups could be make more beneficial for gratifying female needs. Bureaus which are fighting for feminism in Pakistan will find a way to understand females in another unique way. This research will also

help further researchers intending to conduct research in the area of social media and females.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In previous researches, many aspects have been discussed by researchers about social media usage and females. Generally, females are more prone to Social networking sites as they want more social connections (Alnjadat et al, 2019). The reasonable review of literature makes it possible for researcher to complete the current study. Some of the relevant studies related to this study are discussed below. Studies have attempted to find the effects of the content facebook closed group on users.

Some researchers have explored the useful for young age users using experimental method (Morenoa,2016). The pre and post intervention for fitness tasks on face book groups by participants was done. Participants found it useful and enjoyable to have a face book group. Face book groups have also been helpful in providing emotional support to the participant (Alqassim et al,2019). The study used Asynchronous Remote Communities (ARC) approach to access the participants. The purpose was to the emotional support which the females who had experienced miscarriage, perceived to gain from facebook groups they had joined. The study concluded that participants found fcebook groups very helpful for emotional support. Researcher also found that participants who were not much active on facebook posting were interested in posting facebook groups.

Health related face book groups have gain particular attention of the researchers. Many studies on the role of face book groups have been conducted in this regard. Fisher (2016) for example was interested to identify the opinion of Australian people about sexual and reproductive health. To access the targeted people of Australia, research selects an online facebook group of people. Facebook groups are effective tool for gaining complete knowledge about sexual and reproductive health.

Like Fisher (2016) and Greene et al.(2011) also studied the face book group created for a specific disease called TOS. While many researchers have examined the usefulness of face book groups from the perspective of users, and used survey, interview and focus group as data collection tool, Greene and his colleagues conducted content analysis. Content analysis of the posts in Thoracic Outlet Syndrome (TOS) Awareness group found that TOS patients were found using this group to know about the symptoms of this disease and to seek information about its treatment. Results of this study revealed that group members not only seek knowledge from such groups but they also share their own experiences related to their disease which encourage other members as well. Markham et al. (2018) in his study on "Hematology women physician group" also found that the group was helpful in increasing education, knowledge and emotional wellness for its female physician members. Another study on facebook groups created for health was conducted by Thoren et al. (2013). The aim was to highlight the benefits of facebook groups in providing information about preterm infants. It was a qualitative content analysis of the posts, comments and conversations on 25 facebook groups related

to preterm infants.

Researcher found 1497 individual facebook groups related to preterm infants. Researched majority of groups were non-profit fundraising groups and were providing general awareness and emotional and social support to its members. Naturally the majority of the posts were uploaded by female members and were the mothers of preterm infants. Content of group posts and comments showed that main purpose of joining such group was to share experiences and to gain knowledge about such infants. These facebook groups, thus were very useful for parents of preterm infants. Stellefson et al. (2019) explored the effectiveness of information related to foot care for diabetics in facebook groups. It was also a content analysis of the posts of facebook groups to analyze their usefulness. The groups were found effective in changing the behaviors of the participants as majority reported that they had become more conscious about their foot and wash them daily. It was also concluded that doctors, practitioners and nurses consider such groups a big platform to provide information and guide diabetics. Wang with his colleague in 2020 highlighted the role of facebook group in need gratification of the people who suffered from Costello syndrome. Costello is a rare genetic disorder. It affects the all aspects of individual's life. There are very few professionals who have information related to this disorder. There is a group on facebook related to this syndrome where professional post information and cure about Costello syndrome. Researcher through survey identify whether this group is helpful for people in acquiring knowledge or not. Significant results were found which indicates that role of professionals were satisfying the information needs of people.

Beside physical health and emotional support, the role of facebook groups for economical activities has also been recognized. In recent years communication platforms have changed into business platform especially for shopping. Moser et al. (2017) in their qualitative study explored the efficacy of facebook sale groups in local communities. Results of their study revealed that sale groups were not only becoming famous to buy and sell goods with strangers but were also considered a convenient and trustworthy way of shopping by the members. The study also identified the factors that increase the popularity and trust of group to its members. These included, number of members, the behavior of admin and regularity of posts sharing. Wang et al. (2018) was also interested in his research thesis to examine the role of facebook groups in online shopping. The researcher concluded that from among the six identified qualities which attract buyers to buy any product, recommendation of the product was found most important one. Price of a product was the key feature for product attraction. Researcher also concluded that 41 to 50 years of women which stay in home are more prone to buying online products through these groups.

Researcher have also explored the role of facebook groups in facilitating students in educational domain (Thai et al., 2019). In this study researcher investigated the impact of official course facebook group. Quasi experiment was performed on university students. Study concluded that students who had joined facebook course group showed strong social connections, good relations with faculty and a very minimal stress factor related to course whereas students who did not join facebook groups responded differently. Moreover it was also analyzed that such

official facebook groups not only enhance student's engagement with course but also satisfy them with social strong bonding. So according to researcher its rightly to say that facebook groups are positive tool of information for students who are enrolled in higher education. Nicolai et al., (2017) in his article explored the impact of using facebook group on medical students. Researcher was interested to analyse the posting behavior of students and the topics which students cover in facebook groups researcher also analyzed the limitations of face book groups regarding educational use. Multi method approach was used in this study. It was found that the self organized facebook groups give quick access to the challenges posted by curriculum. In these educational groups mostly topics were covered with posts related to organization. Conclusion of this study revealed that all participants reply on posts so quickly. Some ethical issues also considered as limitations of these groups.

Studies have also found facebook groups as a source of need gratification. Difference in needs among users of facebook groups due to demographics has also been reported. Furthermore the association between the needs and political and civic engagement was also examined. Survey from college students revealed that members use facebook groups under the influence of four primary needs i-e socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information. (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009). These basic needs can vary with different demographics as age, gender, family background etc. Researcher concluded that, the use of face of facebook groups was more strongly correlated with information use in comparison to recreational use. Another study based on uses and gratification was conducted by Holtz et al. (2015) which investigated the motivations which urges female to join face book groups. Results revealed that information sharing regarding motherhood, relaxation, entertainment were some major reported motives which urge females to join more face book groups. Ahern et al. (2016) also explored the motivations of students behind using face book groups. To gain information and for decision making regarding their study quires were major reported motives.

Another study on benefits of face book groups attempted to examine that to what extent these groups were helpful for people with eating disorder to overcome their fear (Saffran et al, 2016). The findings showed a significantly positive role of these groups as a vast majority of participants were found satisfied and showed positive attitude, though few were found to have negative attitude about treatment groups.

Some studies have focused multiple aspects of face book groups including motivational factors, attitudes and problems of participants as being a part of a group members, and identification of the effects of face book groups (Stanfield et al, 2017). This small scale case study with social workers revealed that group members found face book groups very useful in their knowledge development regarding different issues. It also provides them to speak out freely about any social issue and enhance their experience that how they can make more effective communication strategies to resolve social issues.

Another aspect focused in studies on Facebook groups has been the Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivations among participants with specific characteristics like learnt

anxiety and conform behavior (Sun,2017) and extrinsic motivational factors, psychological and social sources and culture of media sharing (Pi et al., 2013).The findings of these studies showed that face book course groups had positive impact on motivation learning process whereas learning anxiety and intrinsic motivation had negative correlation(Sun,2017).

The review of literature on face book groups have shown these groups as being effective in gratifying the social, psychological and emotional needs of the participants, and thus portray a positive image. Very few studies,however ,have also found some negative influence of these groups on participants (Fardouly et al.,2017). A comparison of online magazine website and facebook groups on mood and sense of body image among females was done using experimental method. It was found that females who browse face book goups represented more negative mood and were much concerned about their skin, hair and body image than females who just browse onlinemagazine.

The literature review can be summarized as following;

Majority of the studies have been conducted on health related face book groups followed by online buying and education.

In general females as participants of face book groups have been focused in studies. Since a significant no of studies aimed at exploring the motivations, needs and benefits of these groups, theoretical foundations of most studies were based on Uses and gratification.

Survey, Content analysis and experimental design were most common data collection methods.

The study is unique in the sense that no study has been conducted previously on comparison of the gratification acquired by participants with belonging to different age group. Furthermore the motivations and needs of females are different in developing and traditional society like Pakistan. This study is pioneer in the context of Pakistan,

Hypothesis:

- **H1** There will be a significant difference in gratification of social needs among young and adult females.
- **H2** There will be a significant difference in gratification of psychological needs among young and adult females.

METHODOLOGY:

By using simple random sampling technique data was collected from the sample of (N=500) female group members. A comparison of the difference of perceived gratification of both (Social and Psychological) needs on the basis of age was also done. Survey research design was used in this study. To get the broad picture of

need gratification descriptive statistics was used. Independent sample t-test was administrated on data to find out the difference in gratification of needs among young 15 to 24(UNICIEF, 2008) years and adult 25 to 36 years(UNICIEF, 2008) females.

RESULTS:

The mean values of total of research indicators are shown in table 1:

Table 1 Mean value of Total of research Indicators (N=500)

Variables	M(SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Need of Belongingness	18.3(2.5)	5	25
Need of Self-presentation	18.5(2.5)	5	24
Need of Enjoyment	16.6(0.8)	15	19
Need of Usefulness	21.6(2.5)	5	25

Mean, Standard deviation with Minimum and maximum value of total of each research indicator as. Need of belongingness (Mean=18.3,SD=2.5) with minimum 5 and maximum 25, Need of self- presentation (Mean=18.5,SD=2.5),Need of enjoyment (Mean=16.6,SD=0.8) with minimum 15 and maximum 19 value, Need of Usefulness(Mean=21.6,SD=2.5)was computed by using descriptive statistics.

Independent Sample t-test

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of gratification between participants of face book groups belonging to young and older age group.

Table 2:

Independent Sample t-test Comparing difference in gratification of social needs among females through face book groups (N=500; n=250 young females, n=250 older females)

Group Statistics					
	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. Cohen,s d
Gratification of Social needs	Young age participants	250	35.22	4.62	.000
	Older participants	250	38.61	4.43	0.75

The significant (2-tailed) value is 0.000 which is less than $p=0.05$. For users belonging to the young age ($M = 35.22$, $SD=4.62$) and for those of ($M = 38.61$, $SD=4.43$), showing statistically significant difference between the gratification levels of participants belonging to different age groups.

Table 3:

Independent Sample t-test Comparing difference in gratification of social needs among females through face book groups ($N=500$; $n=250$ young females, $n=250$ older females)

Group Statistics					
	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig Cohen,s d
Gratification of Psychological needs	Young age participants	250	38.71	2.52	.000
	Older participants	250	37.89	2.65	0.31

The significant (2-tailed) value is 0.000 which is less than $p=0.05$. For users belonging to the young age ($M = 38.71$, $SD=2.52$) and for those of ($M = 37.89$, $SD=2.65$), showing statistically significant difference between the gratification levels of participants belonging to different age groups.

To measure the age difference in social and psychological need gratification among females through facebook groups, Independent sample t-test was used. Subjects were divided into two groups according to their age (Group 1: Young females; Group 2: Older age females). There was a statically significant difference at the $p<0.5$ level among the scores (youth, $M=35.22$, $SD=4.62$; Adult, $M=38.61$, $SD=4.43$) of two age groups of female members. The significant results, $t=-8.37$, $p<0.01$ revealed that social needs of older age female members were more gratified by face book groups as compare to young females. On other hand significant results revealed that scores ($M=38.71$, $SD=2.52$), $t=-7.79$, $p<0.01$, of young female members was more in psychological need gratification than older members. Cohen's d of social needs (0.75) indicates large effect size. In psychological needs 0.31 Cohen's d indicates small effect.

DISCUSSIONS:

The usage purpose of facebook groups is being reveled in this study with a focus on females. Existing literature advocates that Females are more prone to make social relationships, to gain information about others, to pass their leisure time and for entertainment as well (Dhir & Torsheim, 2016; Stafford et al., 2004). In present study researcher was interested to investigate that, to what extent female members gratify the need of belongingness by using facebook groups. The mean value of

need of belongingness (Mean=18.1, SD= 2.5) was explored by using descriptive statistics, with minimum value (5) and maximum value (25). Findings indicated that the sample (N=500) agrees that they satisfy their need of belongingness after joining facebook groups.

In theoretical frame work in accordance with “Facebook Duel factor Model” gave the idea that belongingness as social need plays a vital role in motivating people to use facebook. Different research studies highlight positive relationship between both, online social networks and belongingness (Tufekci, 2008, Alsamydai, 2016. James et al, 2017, Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

The need of self presentation and its fulfillment was also examined. Mean value (Mean=18.5, SD= 2.5) with minimum (5) and maximum (24) values, indicates that the sample (N=500) do agree that they use facebook groups under the influence of the need of self-presentation. Researcher in the light of results explained that facebook groups help females in impression management. Goffman in “dramaturgical approach” conveys the idea that people present themselves to other people as they want to be seen by others. Facebook groups are very helpful for females in fulfilling their self presentation by making their pleasing image to others and by sharing their skills with their friends and with other group members (Eagly, 2000; Goffman, 1959; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

Current study also investigates the role of facebook groups in satisfying the need of Enjoyment among females. The mean value of need of enjoyment (Mean=16.9, SD=.80) with minimum (15) and maximum (24) values indicated that respondents were agree that they feel sense of enjoyment with facebook groups. Motivation theory states that Enjoyment as a psychological need plays a important role in online media consumption. . In another research study the need of enjoyment was found significantly satisfying the intrinsic need pleasure seeking of people by playing video games (Tamborini et al., 2010; Rubin, 2002; Tamborini et al., 2011, Reinecke et al., 2014; Barker et al., 2013; Lin & Bhattacharjee, 2008). In line with previous findings researcher is justified to say that facebook groups are important online social platform which helps individuals to overcome their boredom or to maintain their well being.

In addition researcher also find out that to what extent need usefulness is being gratified through facebook groups. The mean value of need of “Usefulness” (Mean=21.6, SD=2.5) with minimum (5) and maximum (25) values, indicates that the major part of the respondents reported that facebook groups are beneficial in seeking information about different aspects. Park with his colleagues in his “Uses and Gratification” study about facebook groups identified four factors which people gratify after the consumptions of facebook groups as socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information (Park & Valenzuela, 2009, Yunus & Salehi, 2012; Lin & Bhattacharjee, 2008). With support of previous findings this study highlights that usefulness as a psychological needs plays a great impact on females to join facebook groups.

Researcher after conducting descriptive analysis on research indictors (belongingness M= 18.1, self-presentation M=18.5, enjoyment M=16.9, usefulness M=21.6) on the

basis of mean values concluded that each research indicator in being satisfied by females after the consumption of facebook groups but the highest value of mean scores ($M=21.6$) in the need of "Usefulness" indicates that females more join facebook groups for information seeking purpose. Researcher more concluded that according to respondents they use facebook groups to gain information about their personal and professional life. In a large range different industries have created women only facebook groups , in such groups females can easily got professional support and can got a lot of information about business, such platforms without any restriction of age, class or race helps them in becoming entrepreneur.

It was hypothesized in this study that there will be a significant difference in scores of social and psychological need gratification among young and adult females. With the help of Independent Sample t-test results were analyzed. Results showed that adult females significantly scored high $p<0.5$ ($t=-8.37$, $SD= 4.4$) in social needs (belongingness and self presentation). Whereas scores of young female respondents were significantly high $p<0.5$ ($t=3.5$, $SD= 2.6$) in gratification of psychological needs (Enjoyment, Usefulness).

Researcher concluded that as female get older they more want social connection, they more discuss their private life with others and they want to increase their social circle by using social media they gratify their basic needs, adult females more share their personal relations on social media and they found facebook groups helpful in maintenance of their social life. On other hand young females reported that they use facebook groups for informative purpose especially for academic purpose and to seek pleasure by playing online games in groups or by reading funny comments on different group posts.

CONCLUSION:

Future of any nation belongs to females greatly and it is based on their social and psychological well being. The present study was aimed to investigate the role of facebook groups in gratifying female needs. Findings indicate that female find Facebook groups a valuable forum to network for seeking information and exchanging their ideas to gratify themselves socially and psychologically. The demographic variable of age indicates that Facebook groups seems to be a good platform for adult females who use these groups on great extent to gratify their social needs and to maintain social relations on the other hand young females were found gratifying their psychological needs more through facebook groups. The present data supports the idea that online communication through facebook groups influence females wellbeing. Overall results support that facebook groups plays a vital role in need gratification among females to great extent. Especially in Pakistan where females did not found any specific platform for self-assertion in such circumstances facebook groups are reliably beneficial for them.

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