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Connotations of 24 Hour Stories of Social Media among users

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ABSTRACT: The current study focussed on the frequency of updating 24 hour stories by the users along with ascertaining the reasons behind the popularity of these stories. The researcher worked on a convenient sample of 50 Undergraduate students of Haryana, India. The study found that majority of users updated their 24 hour stories almost daily. Along with, they had varied choices of message types to update. They found such short-lived stories very comforting for posting the online stuff on account of the features they brought ahead. Also, the users largely preferred 24 hour stories over the conventional Social Media posts due to their short life.

KEYWORDS: WhatsApp Status, Facebook Story, Instagram Story, Social Media, Timeline, Social Media Algorithm

I. INTRODUCTION

The timelines of the world have witnessed the most drastic and dramatic change with the advent of Social Media timelines. Social Media has reframed our societal norms in an absolutely subtle manner so that it has become an integral part of our lifestyle now. People used to travel previously when they want to have an experience or an escape. Today they travel because they want to upgrade their social media profiles. They want to inform their friends and followers that they belong to that class.

Similarly, getting decked up remains incomplete without a photo update on the social media. To inform the world regarding what you do and how you do has become a ritual which has to be followed straight away. Sometimes updating about themselves on their social media profiles serves as an answer to the existential crisis. It is not just about sharing personal pictures; people even keep sharing morning greetings, motivational thoughts and their feelings and so on through forwarded images.

Nevertheless, Social Media has become the game changer indeed. The entry of the 24-hour stories which vanish after the stipulated time has added a new dimension to the experience of Social Media. While the conventional posts stay forever on the timelines of the various social Media, the 24 hour stories leave no trace of their being once their shelf life is over. The research of Menon (2022) holds that, "Stories' are a feature on social media platforms that allow users to create a time-sensitive and auto-playing cacophony of images, videos, or both that can be enriched with backgrounds, texts, stickers, animations, music, emojis and effects. Social media Stories are designed to be alive for just 24 h, and after that, they disappear automatically. This Story feature's main aim is to instantly tell others what is happening in one's life or business in the form of a story. Stories appear as gradient borders around the users' profile pictures on their social media platforms. Story features on some platforms let users tagging, add locations and apply hashtags."

Talking in the context of Facebook, it offers the users a fascinating platter of social profile, personal message, Facebook page and Facebook group options. The content that can be shared through social profile can be customised in terms of privacy i.e. the user has all the power to decide whether to share it with the public, or with all the friends or with the selected ones among the friend list only. This feature lets the user get a louder and echoed voice while offering him a sound platform for expressing himself in any which way.

Marshall et al (2015) shed light on the booming acceptance of Facebook among the users and state that, "It is important to understand why people write about certain topics on Facebook insofar as the response they receive may be socially rewarding or exclusionary. Greater awareness of how one's status updates might be perceived by friends could help people to avoid topics that annoy more than they entertain." Besides Facebook profiles, there is yet another popular

feature i.e. personal messages, popularly known as DM's (Direct messages), which offer a wonderful kind of respite where the users have a complete privacy while having a one-to-one conversation with no one stalking, interrupting or distracting. It goes well for fostering relationships. Facebook pages are generally for establishing brand value where you don't connect with your friends, but followers. Your message gets delivered to all those who like and/or follow your page. Similarly, Facebook groups serve the purpose of bringing like-minded people together whether they know each other or not.

Groups are created by the enthusiastic users which can be joined by anyone from across the globe based on their common interests. Again, groups also offer the privacy settings with the help of which the group creators set boundaries for message sharing. Here the like-minded people discuss ideas and learn a lot about the trends or updates on the topics they share.

While all these messages do not perish with time, the Facebook stories stay for 24 hours and then vanish thereafter. The same thing goes with Instagram where users can share information in the form of text, image or video on their profiles or can have DM sessions with the lasting chats or conversations, but an Instagram story stays for 24 hours only. The 24 hour life of Instagram story allures the users of Instagram in a similar manner like a short-lived Facebook story. As per the study of Keerakiatwong et al, (2023), "The results determined that people used Instagram Story to connect with others of a similar disposition, to present their lifestyle, passion and values and as a means of archiving and recollecting past activities." Similarly, Lu & Lin (2022) put forward in their research that, "As for users' participation in Instagram Stories, they are likely to interact with content and with other users to fulfil relationship-building and social-sharing needs. Instagram Stories makes it easy to contribute to conversations in a more personal, private way. Users are able to communicate with others who have shared interests and values and, thereby, widen their social circles."

Coming to the context of WhatsApp, it is an extremely popular messaging application where the users can connect with anyone with the help of their phone numbers. Once connected, you can have a one-to-one conversation or a group chat. Both kinds of conversations stay as long as the users choose to. Unlike these everlasting messages, the WhatsApp status comes with a pre-decided life-period i.e. of 24 hours only, just like Facebook or Instagram Stories. Users put messages in the form of text, images, videos or music on their 24 hour stories for varied reasons. Pattusamy & Chopdar (2024), in their research, state that, "First, the social relations dimension has emerged as one of the prevalent motivations. In this dimension, we have understood that the users keep the WhatsApp status to maintain social relations with their contacts. One of the main intentions is to stay connected and strengthen relationships with their close contacts."

Yu & Chen (2020), in their study, elaborate upon the trend of stories and establish that "Stories are more appealing to users, provoke more positive affect, are more addictive, and are more likely to become stages where narcissists can showcase themselves and draw the attention of others than conventional news feeds. This study also found that Stories usage is a more significant determinant of psychological consequences than conventional news feeds usage. The prediction of news feeds with regard to addiction, narcissism, and positive affect also seems to be diminishing and is being replaced by those of Stories." Greenwood (2013), in his study, shares similar notion, stating that "Because they can substantially increase "viewing numbers" or "emoji reactions" to their stories, they may then validate their popularity and enhance self-worth and self-identity. Their needs to be seen and valued".

Objectives

The broad objective of the study was to figure out the reasons behind acceptance and popularity of 24 hour stories. Specifically the researcher focussed on ascertaining

- The frequency of updating stories
- The choice of messages to update
- Reason behind the popularity of 24 hour stories
- Reason behind preferring 24 hour stories over the regular and everlasting posts
- Why the users loved the short life of these messages

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

Despite being a very popular new add to the Social Media experience of the users, the researcher found a major research gap when it came to the connotations of the 24 hour stories among the users. The researcher tried to figure out the lacunas and worked on them by observing the trends of Social Media followed by extant literature study.

Survey method was deployed by the researcher for the current study. Using convenient sampling, a total of 50 samples were obtained from among the Undergraduate students in Haryana, India. A digital link to the Google Form structured questionnaire was sent to the students through the digital teaching platforms used in their classrooms. No conflicts of interest were recognised as such in the current study. The data so obtained were treated for further statistical procedures i.e. Descriptive statistics.

III. RESULTS

Demographic Profile

Among the 50 respondents, a total of 10% belonged to the age group of (26-35). Rest of the respondents fell under the (18-25) age-group. 50% of the respondents belonged to the rural area, while 12% came from the semi-urban area. The remaining 38% respondents belonged to urban area.

Psychographic Profile

When asked regarding the frequency of updating their 24 hour stories, 44% respondents reported that they updated their 24 hour stories daily on their choice of Social Media. 34% users said that they did so occasionally while rest of the users (22%) submitted that they rarely updated their 24 hour stories.

Further, they were asked to submit the kind of messages they updated. They were given the option of selecting more than one reason. They came up with a variety of responses. 62% users said that they updated their statuses/stories for wishing their friends on their anniversaries.

56% respondents said that they shared motivational messages on their stories. An equal number of respondents i.e. 56% users said that they put their selfies with friends and family. 32% respondents submitted that they updated their favourite songs on the stories hence sharing a slice of their life with their connections. 30% users reported that they put religious messages or sermons on their stories. Another 30% submissions were regarding sharing important links through such soon-to-vanish messages. 26% users said that they put messages of anniversaries of national or social importance. Another set of 26% users updated their stories every time whenever they got a new look. This helped them bag compliments which fostered their confidence. 20% respondents told that they were fond of updating funny/comic messages through their 24 hour-stories. 18% users updated their WhatsApp Status and/or Facebook/Instagram stories with scientific images or videos. 8% users updated their statuses when they felt sad. They posted sad messages only then. Similarly, another 8% users admitted that showed attitude through such 24 hour-posts. 6% users updated stories when they felt angry. They showcased similar feelings with their followers whenever they felt angry. 2% users submitted that their 24 hour statuses or stories reflected their mood stories.

Furthermore, the users were asked for the reason behind the popularity of the 24 hour stories. They could again submit more than one option. Majority of the users i.e. 52% respondents submitted that they preferred these stories among other modes of posting for the advanced features of privacy that it offered. 46% users prioritised multimedia content that these applications served. The ease of posting Multimedia content led them to post things over such stories. 40% users liked the free of cost nature of these platforms and services. 38% users were drawn towards these stories due to their popularity amongst their acquaintances hence convincing them to be a part of the same.

The ease of putting stories propelled 26% users towards posting stories. 2% users submitted that conveniently watching others' stories thus witnessing their lives through these platforms led to the popularity of these 24-hour stories.

Likewise, the researcher wanted to seek the reason behind the preferring to post content on the 24 hour stories over regular and everlasting posts of the same platforms. Majority of the users i.e. 50% users reported that they chose to

share their messages with their all contacts conveniently through this option. Moreover, it depended on the choice of other users whether or not to watch a particular story. 45% users submitted that these options offered a wonderful medium for sharing the moments with their contacts, friends or followers.

Following this, the users were asked regarding the thing they liked about the short-term of the 24 hour stories. 42% users reported that their Social Media experience got respite from boredom with the shorter span. Other 24% respondents felt that a new update every 24 hours sounded way better to them. 20% users said that they could make the updates as per the prevalent time, atmosphere or the agenda. Besides, 14% users felt that removing the posts was not a task any more with such time-bound stories.

IV. INTERPRETATION

The real world of today is getting shaped by the modus operandi of the virtual world to a great extent. The way people interact with each other on their social media profiles has affected their personal, professional, social life immensely. Social Media has become a wonderful medium of connecting with each-other, for expressing oneself as well as for impressing the world.

The findings of the current study indicate that the users love to post on their Social Media. Although the 24 hour stories are relatively a new entrant in the Virtual world yet they have impacted the users deeply. People love to find reasons to post on the stories. The choice of messages might differ from person to person and from time to time, but the urge to post remains the same.

The reasons behind the popularity of these stories may be many, but the bottom line is that people ask for the new trends from time to time. They enjoy being a part of them provided the trends comfort them. The algorithm of Social Media also makes it a point to keep their timelines updated as per their choice, taste and interest.

The way Social Media has been penetrating into our lives, it is crystal clear that it is here to stay. Still, new trends need to be imbibed into the basic fabric of Social Media from time to time. 24 hour stories answer the quench of new and crunchy as well as a creative add-on. It also depicts that people like every thing fast in this fast moving and fast changing world. They even choose their Social Media updates to get posted fast and then vanished fast.

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