

# Content Sharing in Social Media - A Study on the Effect of Personality and Gratifications

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**Abstract**— Present scenarios prove that content sharing in social media has become an activity of increasing economic, marketing, political and social importance. Still knowledge regarding sharing of content in social media is meagre. The influence of personality traits of the user regarding sharing of content is taken into account in this paper. The hypothesis was checked with the help of a pan India online survey. The respondents included 200 online social media account holders to identify the impact of various personality factors on the relationship between Uses and Gratifications and Intention to share content. Results from the SEM modelling analysis revealed that respondents show positive significance between the factors. The data was analyzed using multiple regression and SEM. This study identified that factors such as Personality has significant positive impact on the content shared by users in social media.

**Index Terms**— Online Content, Social Media, Extroversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Socializing, Entertainment, Information Seeking, Status Seeking, Intention to Share.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Human experience has been changed a lot by social media. It has been used to find information, to sell and buy products, socialize, entertainment and in discussions. Surveys have shown that three quarters of people use online medias for connecting with others especially teens and for majority communication remains the primary purpose for logging in to social networks. The Social media has become an important part of everyone's lives and its usage is increasing frequently at an exponential rate.

In the past users went online because of the anonymity and that has changed a lot. Now they use social media to socialize and connect with new people. There are factors that enable these to happen and social networking sites and instant messaging sites top the list. More than half of users who are young adults and adults share content in social media for information, connectivity, status and entertainment.

With a user base of millions worldwide, it puts forward the query about the type of people that rely on these social media sites that are online, in previous studies three of the five personality traits were found to be relevant to usage of social media. They are neuroticism, extroversion and openness to experience. Those who are drawn more to social networking sites tend to be users who

are more open to experiences. It is also related to high areas of neuroticism also. While the case is different in people with more extroversion who use the medium to send and receive instant messages.

When taking the whole population into consideration it may not be relevant with the whole population. There are many studies that have been done before on effect of personality and usage of social media, the study was limited only to college students. This had limitations as it could capture the effect on other age groups nor did they control for the possible impact on the sharing behavior and socio-economic and demographic variables of the sample. This paper attempts to add the influence of personality on the relationship between and social media use and intention to share content in social media in a national sample of Indian adults.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ■ *Personality*

The personality traits that is most widely used is the big five and it is used because of its relevance. It categorises personalities into extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness and openness to experience. User's personality relates to each action and decision they make. Personality and internet usage has found significant connections like introverted people use internet more than extroverted and they use It to socialize and make connections. These kinds of relevant relations where found when personality was taken into account. For measuring big five, a brief measure was developed and the scale was used accordingly which is a 10-item measurement scale.

### ■ *Uses and Gratifications*

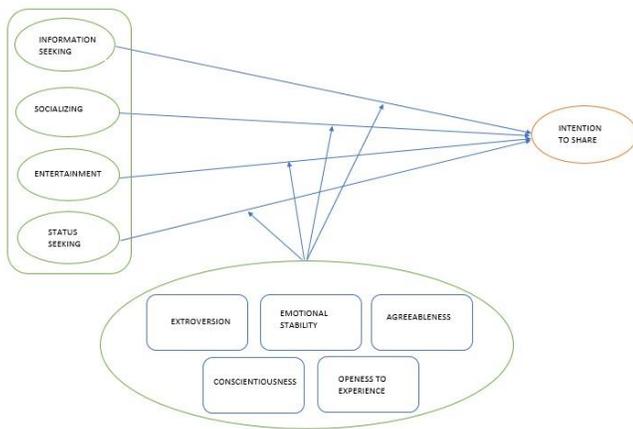
U&G is a theory that discusses what social and psychological needs motivate audiences to select particular media channels and their subsequent behaviour. The effectiveness and relevancy in media usage with regard to mass communication makes the theory relevant. Here the users clearly utilises media to fulfil their needs and according to their choices. It can be defined by the variables of information seeking, socializing, entertainment or status

seeking. The consumption of media is made personalized and participatory which is different when compared to traditional media.

### III. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

With the review of the literature, this paper defines a conceptual model. It helps to understand the personality factors that influence the relationship between social media uses and gratifications and intention to share content along with other moderating variables like gender and age of the respondents.

FIGURE I: CONCEPTUAL MODEL



#### Information Seeking

Social media can be an alternative source of information which is timely and relevant to an extent. This gratification can be strongly linked to social media usage and content sharing. Users with similar interest are likely to share more content more frequently to facilitate further information seeking and satisfy future information needs.

**H1: Information seeking will positively influence the users' intention to share content in social media.**

#### Socializing

Achieving a sense of belonging can be related to the online user's interaction in social media. Internet is an alternative to interpersonal communications and has strong relation to media consumption. Socializing was one of the main criteria's that had an effect on college users to participate in social media platforms. So social media foster the relationships and nurture that leading to sharing content to develop these relationships

**H2: Socializing will positively influence the users' intention to share content in social media.**

#### Entertainment

Social media might serve as a medium of entertainment as it supports users' needs to escape, enjoy and release pressure. It strongly encourages people to share content in social media especially within an online community. These photos provide good forms of entertainment to users like gossiping, creating fun with people and issues happening around us.

**H3: Entertainment will positively influence the users' intention to share content in social media**

#### Status seeking

It portrays how people share content in platforms like social media to obtain status among the users. Usually by sharing knowledge they attain status. So, involvement in social media can be related to attainment of this status also it leads to one of the main uses of social media

**H4: Status seeking will positively influence the users' intention to share content in social media**

#### Personality Traits

Personality is a potential factor on the usage of social media platforms, and the big five was taken into account and three of the five factors have shown relationship to social media usage according to previous literature. Even though the significance with usage was determined content sharing was not taken into account. Based on previous literature the following hypothesis on influence of personality was proposed

**H5: Information seeking and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Extroversion**

**H6: Socializing and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Extroversion**

**H7: Entertainment and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Extroversion**

**H8: Status seeking and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Extroversion**

This hypothesis is developed from the literature study that more extroverted people tend to spend more time in social media and hence are heavy users than other personality traits. And regular usage has to be tested with content sharing behavior in social media.

**H9: Information seeking and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Emotional Stability**

**H10: Socializing and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Emotional Stability**

**H11: Entertainment and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Emotional Stability**

**H12: Status seeking and intention to share content relationship will be positively moderated by Emotional Stability**

The measures of neurotism is very strongly related to emotional stability. Hence people with more emotional stability are influenced by particular aspects of platforms like social media. These can either be image or text based content .This hypothesis is derived from this learning.

**H13: The relationship between information seeking and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Agreeableness**

**H14: The relationship between Socializing and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Agreeableness**

**H15: The relationship between Entertainment and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Agreeableness**

**H16: The relationship between Status seeking and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Agreeableness**

This hypothesis is proposed based on previous studies that showed positive correlation between agreeableness and usage. It showed relation between content upload in social media. Further testing was required to see if content sharing has the same effect as content upload.

**H17: The relationship between information seeking and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Conscientiousness**

**H18: The relationship between Socializing and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Conscientiousness**

**H19: The relationship between Entertainment and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Conscientiousness**

**H20: The relationship between Status seeking and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Conscientiousness**

In contrast to previous studies our hypothesis suggests that people who scores more on traits of conscientiousness are linked to features of social media usage. The hypothesis was set to test the above contrast.

**H21: The relationship between information seeking and intention to share content intention to share content will be positively moderated by Openness to experience**

**H22: The relationship between Socializing and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Openness to experience**

**H23: The relationship between Entertainment and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Openness to experience**

**H24: The relationship between Status seeking and intention to share content will be positively moderated by Openness to experience**

This hypothesis is adapted from a study that found that people who are more open to experience are frequent users of social media sites. That formed the basis on which the hypothesis was formed that openness to experience might influence content sharing

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

##### ■ *Questionnaire Development and Measures*

An online survey questionnaire was created and conducted. The various aspects of social media usage such as information seeking, Socializing, Entertainment and Status seeking were measured. Among the questions, few were adapted from the existing literature. So far no previous research was done on the influence of personality on Intention to share content in social media. Below are the scales that are taken from the standard scales in literature. The measurements assessing gratifications of information seeking, socializing, entertainment and status seeking for content sharing in social media were adapted from a U&G research (Le et al., 2010; park et al., 2009). Intention to share news was adopted from Lee et al. (2010) and Hagger et al. (2007). The variables were measured using 5 point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. These scales take care of the effect of the variables. The scale measuring Personality is measured using Personality scale with 10 questions (Gosling et al., 2003). This scale serves as apt measure for the Big-Five dimensions of personality. The Big-Five was selected as it was the most reliable and commonly used model in psychology to classify personality traits in humans (John&Srivastava, 1999). The 10-item personality index has adequate levels of reliability and validity. The items were measured using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from “Entirely disagree” to “Entirely Agree”.

##### *B. Data Description*

An online sample of 200 people across various locations pan India was collected and for various age groups. The following table describe the sample collected for this study.

TABLE I: DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Age Category	Female	Male
N= 200		
18-29	21	34

Above 30	59	86
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>120</b>

The data was collected during the months of February and March 2017. The sample was collected from metro and non-metro cities across the country. The table below provides data regarding the sample collected in the survey.

TABLE II:  
SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Type of City	No of Respondents
Metro	60
Non - Metro	140

### Initial Analysis

Out of the 200 online respondents 98% had a social media account. Upon enquiry about the most frequently used social media platform Facebook came out top with 70.5% of the total. 89.5% of the users were active in their preferred social media accounts for more than 3 years that counts to 179 out of the 200 online respondents.

Out of the 6 basic emotions that was found as factors of viral online content emotion of joy was found out as the main factor which contributed to 74.5% of the total respondents.

Majority of users came in less than 1 hour and 1-2 hours in their daily frequency of usage and it contributed to 55.5% in total.

Majority of the users shared content on a daily basis with 70% of them sharing an average of 1 content per day and these contents were shared mostly in the evening session from 6pm – 12am in the evening.

## V. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

According to the study done on the hypothesis, the regression was done in SPSS and the results was found out. Information seeking, Socializing and Status seeking was found to be significant as the p-value was less than 0.05. Entertainment was found to be not significant as the p-value was greater than 0.05. For unit change in Information seeking there is .263 change in Intention to share, socializing .271 change in Intention to share and for Status seeking .280 change in Intention to share.

TABLE III: RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION MODEL

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.695	.263		2.644	.009
	Information	.195	.077	.203	2.527	.012
	Socializing	.299	.089	.271	3.369	.001
	Entertainment	-.001	.072	-.001	-.008	.994
	Status	.255	.059	.280	4.351	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Share						

TABLE III: RESULTS OF THE SEM MODEL

SL No	Path	$\beta$	p-Value	Result
H1	Information Seeking - Intention to share	0.08	0.1	Supported
H2	Socializing - Intention to share	0.35	<0.01	Supported
H3	Entertainment - Intention to share	0.02	0.35	Not supported
H4	Status Seeking - Intention to Share	0.24	<0.01	Supported
H5	Information Seeking - Extroversion - Intention to Share	0.15	<0.01	Supported
H6	Socializing – Extroversion - Intention to share	0.26	<0.01	Supported
H7	Entertainment - Extroversion - Intention to Share	0.19	<0.01	Supported
H8	Status Seeking - Extroversion - Intention to share	0.04	0.27	Not supported
H9	Information Seeking - Emotional Stability - Intention to Share	0.12	0.02	Supported
H10	Socializing - Emotional Stability - Intention to share	0.21	<0.01	Supported
H11	Entertainment - Emotional Stability - Intention to Share	0.11	0.03	Supported
H12	Status Seeking - Emotional Stability - Intention to share	0.05	0.21	Not supported
H13	Information Seeking - Agreeableness - Intention to Share	0.21	<0.01	Supported
H14	Socializing – Agreeableness - Intention to share	0.09	0.06	Supported
H15	Entertainment - Agreeableness - Intention to Share	0.29	<0.01	Supported
H16	Status Seeking - Agreeableness - Intention to share	0.11	0.03	Supported
H17	Information Seeking - Conscientiousness - Intention to Share	0.17	<0.01	Supported

H18	Socializing – Conscientiousness - Intention to share	0.18	<0.01	Supported
H19	Entertainment - Conscientiousness - Intention to Share	0.03	0.29	Not supported
H20	Status Seeking - Conscientiousness - Intention to share	0.02	0.36	Not supported
H21	Information Seeking - Openness to Experience - Intention to Share	0.2	<0.01	Supported
H22	Socializing - Openness to Experience - Intention to share	0.1	0.04	Supported
H23	Entertainment - Openness to Experience - Intention to Share	0.08	<0.01	Supported
H24	Status Seeking - Openness to Experience - Intention to share	0.04	0.25	Not supported

Extroversion does not have any significance (p-value 0.27) in the relationship between Status seeking and intention to share. Likewise, Emotional stability does not have any significance (p-value 0.21) in the relationship between Status seeking and Intention to share. Conscientiousness doesn't have any significance when it comes to relationship between Entertainment (p-value 0.29) as well as Status seeking (p-value 0.36) and intention to share. Openness to experience does not show any significance (p-value 0.25) in the relation between Status seeking and intention to share. Remaining all personality traits show significance in the relationship between uses and gratifications and Intention to share content in social media. The p-value was recorded as less than 0.05 for the path in these relations. The results thereby proved the hypothesis that personality traits do affect the content sharing behaviour of social media users based on their uses and gratifications.

#### VI. LIMITATIONS

Due to limited time and resources the survey was given online which have yielded a skewed sample of age groups. More influencing factors other than personality was not covered in this research. Further study could focus on segmentation based on more demographic studies and usage. Study takes into consideration only public social media platforms and other ones was not included in the list for the study. Personality was tested using a brief measure instead of the long range of questionnaire due to time and space constraints.

#### VII. CONCLUSION

The study indicates that certain personality factors does influence the relationship between uses and gratifications of social media and intention to share content. Personality does play an important and vital factor in social media usage and the study proves likewise. It contributes to understanding how personality predicts sharing of content in social media. This type of study was necessary and relevant as user generated and shared content was

becoming crucial in the future for social media marketing, also could explain the virality of online content.

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