



PERCEPTIONS AND USAGE PATTERN OF YOUTUBE: AN INFLUENTIAL TOOL

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ABSTRACT:

Nowadays, social media is becoming the most popular medium for showcasing creativity and providing information in the form of photos, videos, vlogs and blogs. YouTube, an American online video sharing and social media platform has earned its place as the 2nd largest search engine next to Google, as it is easy to create content and simple to use. It is one of the best ways to communicate to a wide audience, whether an individual is promoting programs or providing information to students. There are more than 37 million YouTube channels existing on the platform and people upload more than 100 hours of video per minute on YouTube. YouTube may be available free of cost, but the information available can be misleading and can cause physical, emotional and mental health issues. Hence, this study aims to understand the perception, usage pattern, and its impact on individuals. The data for the study was collected through a survey method with the use of a convenience sampling method. One hundred and thirty participants of varied age groups voluntarily took part in the study. The survey consisted of fifteen questions of which fourteen were close ended while one was open ended. The collected data was analysed by dividing the participants into age and gender categories. Some of the key findings include that almost all the participants (99%) watch and enjoy YouTube. More than 50% of participants watch YouTube for entertainment, to learn something new, to relax or de-stress and to get motivated. Around 80% of participants subscribe to YouTube channels out of which most of them are based on their interest, while a little more than 15% of the participants have their own channels related to educational purpose, information transfer and for professional purposes. 4% of participants watch YouTube for more than 16 hours on a weekly basis. Almost half the participants think that YouTube is a good source of income and can be pursued as a career. Due to covid, the time pattern of watching YouTube has increased by 70% out of which 50% watch it more for entertainment purposes. Other than YouTube, 80% of participants surf Instagram regularly. Changes recommended by the participants include removal of advertisements and inappropriate content. When it comes to kids accessing the site, there are many parents concerned about the

negative effects of YouTube on youth. Meanwhile, it's an essential part of classrooms - both virtual and in-person-around the world. According to data, people check their phone more than 150 times a day. These changing usage patterns among all age groups is indeed a cause for concern. Humans are losing touch with fellow humans and in-depth studies are needed to ascertain the long-term impact of excessive usage. Awareness should also be created amongst all age groups especially in the youth to avoid unfavourable consequences.

Keywords: *YouTube, awareness, perceptions, channels*

Why do people watch YouTube?

YouTube has become a search engine in itself and people of all backgrounds (demographic, socio-economic and educational) can easily access the application. Almost all individuals have watched videos on YouTube either through the application or through links of videos shared on other social media. The most common reasons for the viewership of YouTube are to “feel entertained” and “to feel relaxed” as well as “easy access”. Masses love to watch YouTube because they have the freedom and control to do anything with their content. The videos can be accessed without necessarily creating videos. Ease to download videos and share the video links also help in *the popularity of the application. The videos available on the application cover a wide array of interests and are thus appealing to the masses.

Advantages and Drawbacks of YouTube:

With the open access and copious amount of data available on the YouTube application there are some advantages as well as drawbacks with regards to the same.

Some of the advantages are:

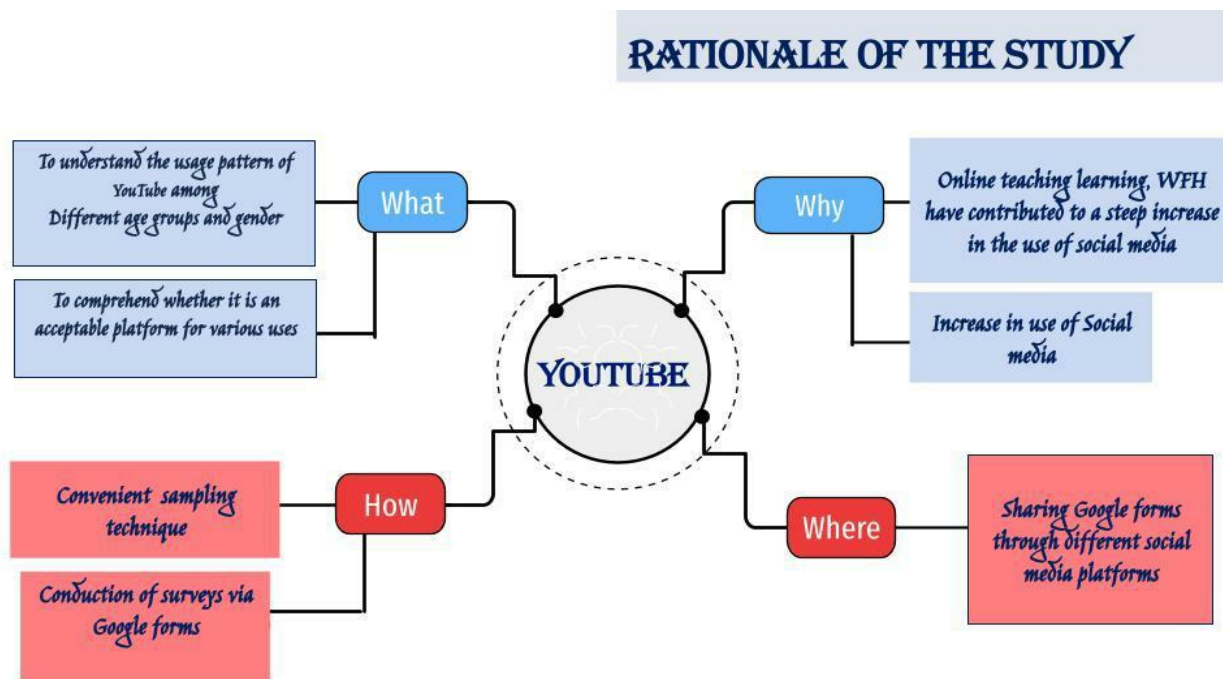
- Open access, free of cost
- Curiosity can be immediately satisfied
- Viewing content on YouTube can also help save money
- Educational content helps in better learning
- Helps in creation of jobs and income
- Reduces anxiety when alone

Some of the drawbacks of the application include:

- Information may not be authentic
- People end up spending too much time on YouTube
- Longer screen time can affect efficiency of the person
- Not all content may be age appropriate

- Can lead to anxiety, depression and loneliness
- Can impact body image and fear of missing out

Rationale of the Study:



AIM:

The study aims to understand the usage patterns and perception of YouTube across different age groups and gender to ascertain its impact on developmental lifespan.

OBJECTIVES:

- To ascertain the usage patterns of YouTube of the participants (based on age and gender) with regards to number of hours spent, type of content viewed, purpose of viewing content and type of channels subscribed to
- To explore variations in the usage patterns and perceptions of YouTube on the basis of differences in age and gender.
- To understand the perceptions of the participants (based on age and gender) towards YouTube and to identify its advantages and disadvantages on the basis of the responses received.
- To examine whether the usage pattern of YouTube has changed in the Covid times.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is exploratory in nature and is flexible. The study uses convenience sampling technique with reliance on available subjects. Two surveys were conducted as a part of the study. Survey I was formulated to assess the usage patterns of YouTube. The survey was self-constructed by the researchers and included fifteen questions of which 14 questions were closed ended while one question was open ended. The survey was conducted using Google forms and was voluntarily submitted by 129 participants. Survey II was conducted to understand the perception of YouTube amongst the participants. The survey form was self-constructed by the researchers using Google forms and included ten closed ended questions. The survey form was filled in by 97 participants. Participants of the study were between the age group of 10 years – 65 years of age and were included in the study irrespective of their religion, education and income levels.

The data was tabulated and analysed on the basis of their age and gender. Participants from the age of 10 – 25 years of age are referred to as Youth, and those between the age of 26 – 65 years are referred to as adults.

Results and Discussion:

Survey I was conducted to ascertain the Viewing Behaviour of YouTube and It's Impact among the participants of the study. The survey was conducted using Google forms and 129 participants participated in the study. The participants have been segregated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Female Youth: 44 | Male Youth: 12 |
| Female Adults: 34 | Male Adults: 6 |

The results of Survey I are as follows:

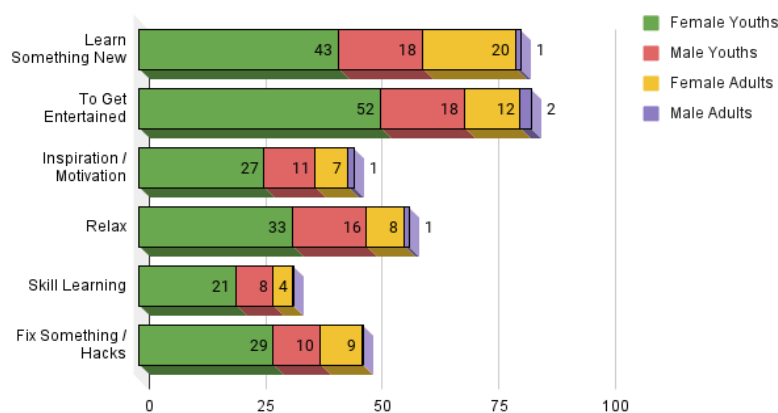
1. Reasons for watching YouTube:

Fig. No. 1 Reasons for Watching YouTube

The above graph shows that the maximum participants watch YouTube to get entertained (65%), learn something new (63.5%) or to relax (45%). Some of the lesser-known reasons include hacks / to fix something, to get inspiration / motivation and to learn new skills.

2. Approximate time spent watching YouTube on a weekly basis:

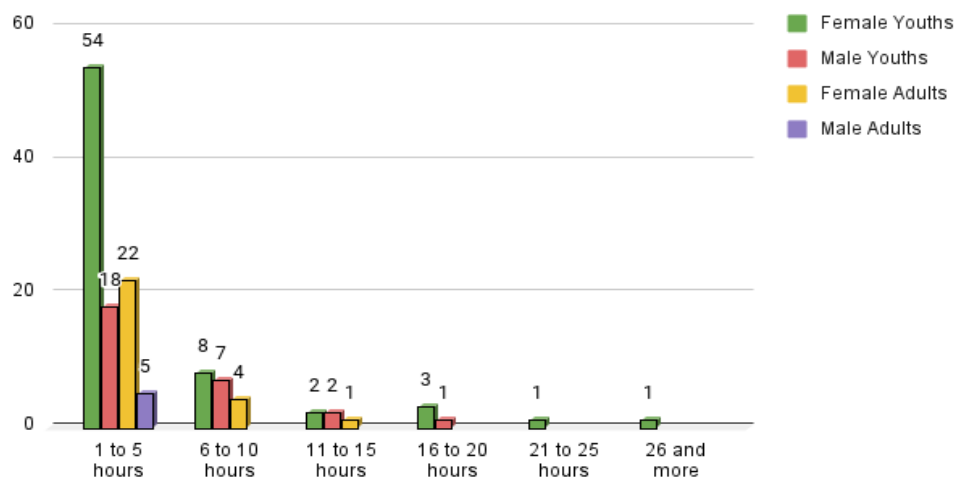


Fig. No. 2 Time spent on YouTube on a Weekly basis

A little more than 3/4th of the participants (76.5%) spends between 1 – 5 hours viewing YouTube on a weekly basis, while almost 15% of the participants spend up to 10 hours a week viewing YouTube. One participant each watch YouTube for 21 – 25 hours a week and for more than 26 hours on a weekly basis.

3. Type of videos viewed on YouTube:

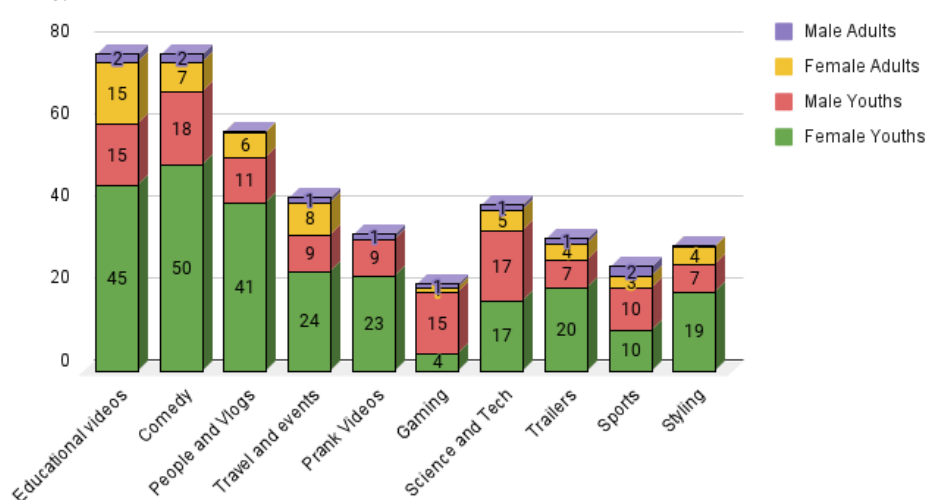


Fig. No. 3 Type of videos viewed on YouTube

The participants selected multiple options for the kind of videos viewed by them, since all viewers watch different type of content depending on varied factors. It can be noted from the above graph that maximum participants (almost 60%) view comedy and educational videos on YouTube, while the least participants (17%) view gaming videos on YouTube.

It can also be observed that Male youth prefer watching gaming, sports as well as science & tech videos in comparison to females. Males watch fewer videos on styling and trailers.

3. Subscription of channels on YouTube:

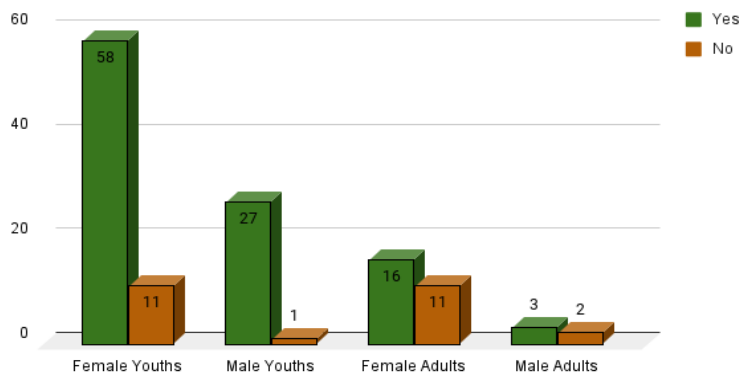


Fig. No. 4 Subscription of channels on YouTube

From the above figure, it can be observed that almost 84% participants subscribe channels on YouTube. However, it can also be noted that the youth subscribe to channels in a higher percentage as compared to the adults.

5. Kind of channels subscribed on YouTube:

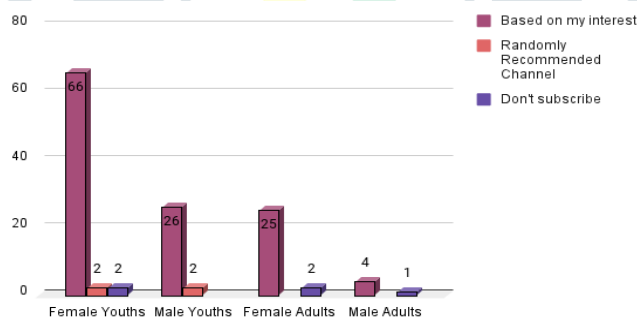


Fig. No. 5 Kind of channels subscribed on YouTube

The above figure shows that 94% participants subscribe to channels on YouTube based on their interest, while only 5% youth subscribe to randomly recommended channels. Only 7 participants mentioned that they do not subscribe to channels on YouTube.

6. Experience a feeling of joy on watching YouTube:

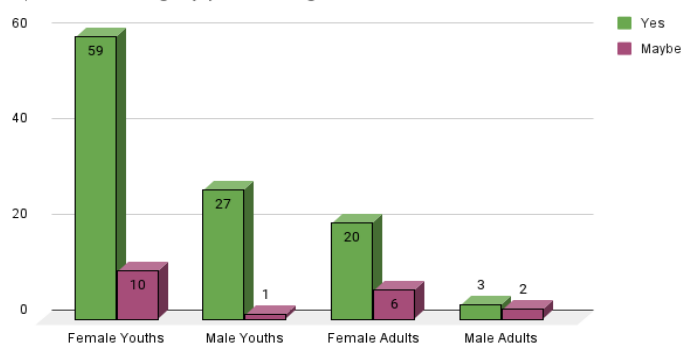


Fig. No. Experience a feeling of joy on watching YouTube

85% participants reported that they experience a feeling of joy while watching YouTube. However, it must be noted that the youth enjoy the viewership more than the adults.

7. Participants having their own YouTube channel:

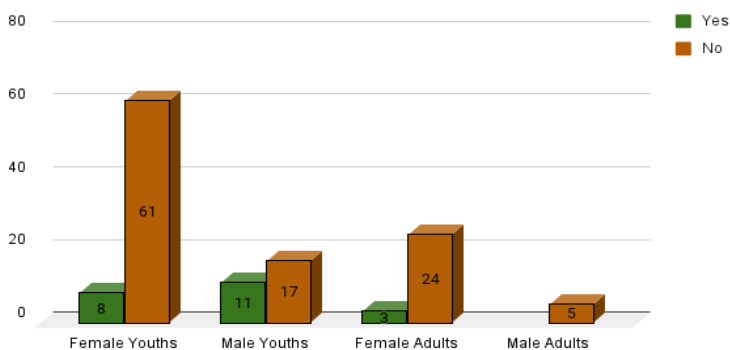


Fig No. 7 Participants having their own YouTube channel

The above figure indicates that only 11% of the participants have their own YouTube channel. It is important to note that none of the male adults have their channel and very few female adults have their channel. The youth find it easier to create their videos and own channel on YouTube.

8. Purpose of YouTube channel of the participants:

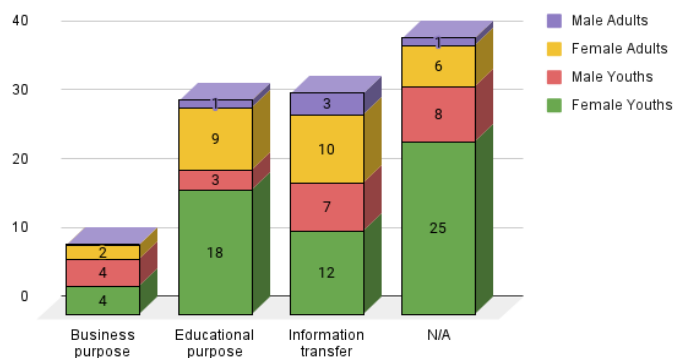


Fig. No. 8 Purpose of YouTube channel of the participants

As seen in the Fig. No. 7, only 11% participants have their own YouTube channel. Participants having their own YouTube channels are usually based on educational purpose and for information transfer or business purposes.

9. YouTube as a source of Income:

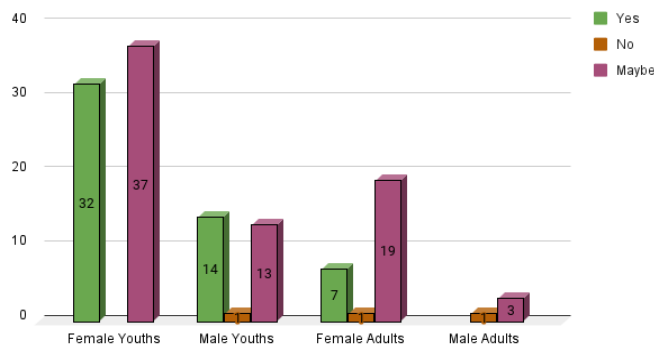


Fig. No. 9 YouTube as a source of income

Almost half the youth participants (48%) feel that YouTube can be a good source of income. It can also be observed that 20% of the female adults also feel that YouTube can be a good source of income, while the male adults do not agree with the same. 50% of the participants are not sure if videos can be uploaded on YouTube to generate income.

10. YouTube as a Career option:

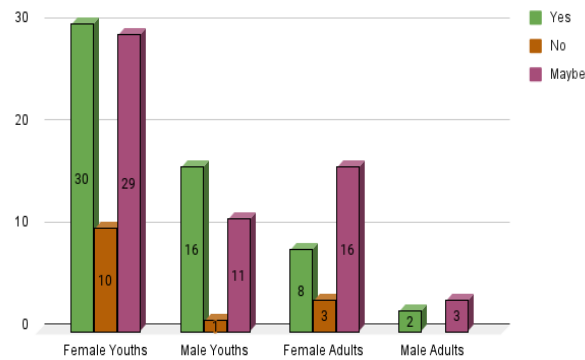


Fig. No. 10 YouTube as a Career option

As indicated in the previous figure, 48% of the participants feel that YouTube is a good source of income, a little more than 50% of the participants feel that YouTube can be explored as an effective career option. It is also important to note that almost 14% of the participants are sure that YouTube is not an effective career option.

11. Change of pattern in viewing content on YouTube due to Pandemic:

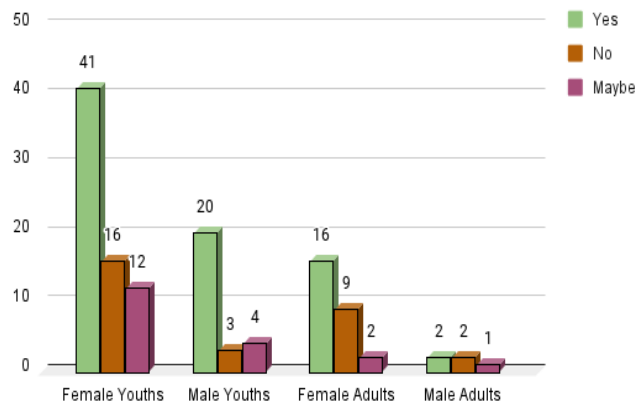


Fig. No. 11 Change of pattern in viewing content on YouTube due to Pandemic

The Covid – 19 pandemic has affected the entire population across the globe. It can thus be noted that a little more than 60% of the participants confirmed that they have changed their viewing pattern of videos on YouTube due to the pandemic.

12. Kinds of changes in the viewing pattern due to Pandemic [Time]:

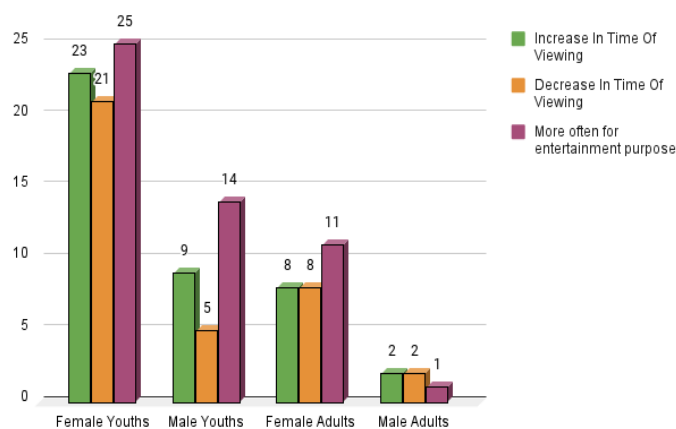


Fig. No. 12 Kinds of changes in the viewing pattern due to Pandemic [Time]

The above figure shows that the viewing pattern of 30% of the participants has not been affected due to the pandemic. While for other participants there is an increase in time for watching YouTube videos which is more often for entertainment purposes. This maybe because the majority population was at home due to the lockdown.

13. Other social media used in addition to YouTube:

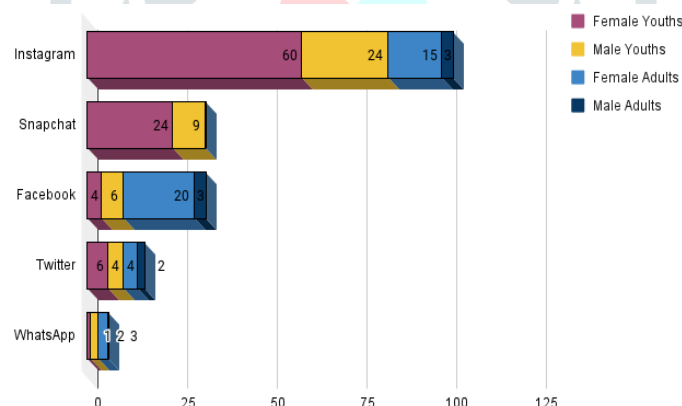


Fig. No. 13 Other social media used in addition to YouTube

The other common social media apps like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are also used by the participants. Almost 70% of the youth prefer using Instagram and Snapchat rather than YouTube while an increased use of Facebook is common among the adult participants.

SURVEY II: Survey II was conducted to understand the Perceptions of YouTube among Active Users among the participants of the study. The survey was conducted using Google forms and 130 participants participated in the study. The participants have been segregated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Female Youth: 70 | Male Youth: 28 |
| Female Adults: 27 | Male Adults: 5 |

The results of Survey I are as follows:

1. Is YouTube an excellent tool for all age groups:

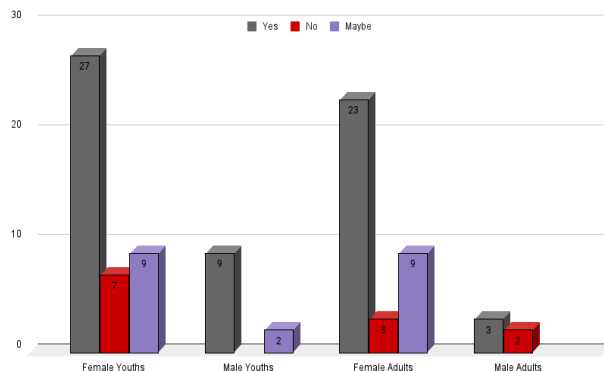


Fig. No. 14 Is YouTube an excellent tool for all age groups

The above figure shows that 84% of the participants feel that YouTube is an excellent tool and can be used effectively for all age groups. It is also essential to note that twelve female participants and two male adults do not feel that YouTube is an excellent tool for all age groups.

2. Advantages of YouTube according to the participants:

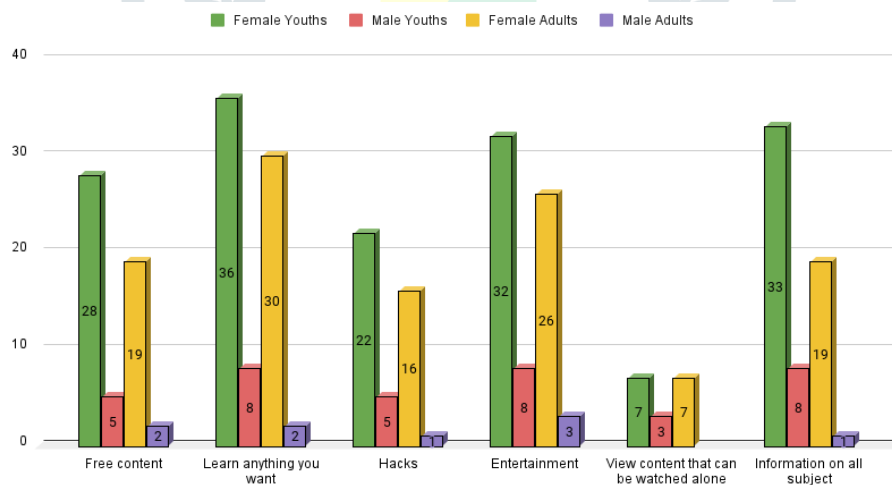


Fig. No. 15 Advantages of YouTube

The participants could select as many options in the above question as there is no single perceived advantage of using YouTube. The participants have selected the options in the preference order of Learn anything you want, entertainment and free content as the common advantages of YouTube. Very few participants have listed view content that can be watched alone as an advantage of YouTube.

3. Disadvantages of YouTube according to the participants:

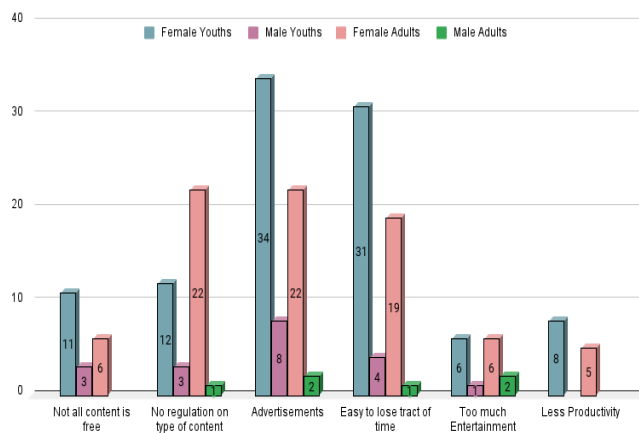


Fig. No. 16 Disadvantages of YouTube

Some of the disadvantages indicated by the participants include advertisements before and in between videos and easy to lose track of time. Almost 75% of the Female adults have also indicated no regulation on type of content as a disadvantage of YouTube considering they may have young children at home who maybe using devices.

4. Is the content appropriate for all age groups?

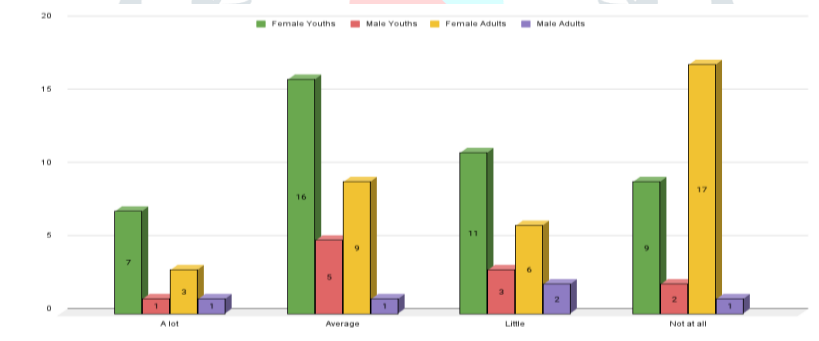


Fig. No. 17 Is the content age appropriate

From the above figure, it can be noted that male and female youth participants feel that the content is average in terms of its appropriateness for all age groups. Male adults feel that the content is not as appropriate for all age groups, while the female adults that the content on YouTube is not at all age appropriate. This question has been included in the survey since YouTube asks the content creators if the videos are appropriate for the younger audience.

5. Participants annoyed to see someone spending a lot of time on YouTube:

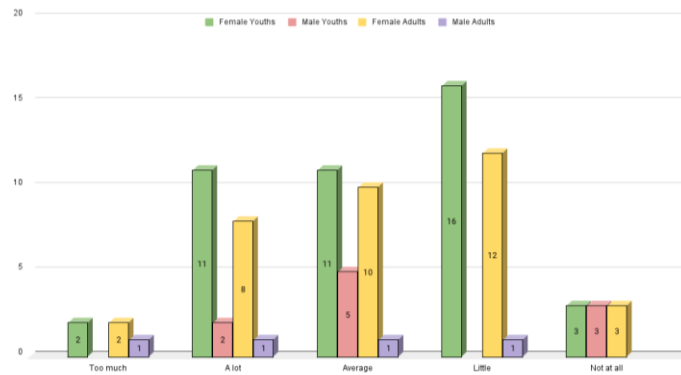


Fig. No. 18 Participants annoyed to see someone spending a lot of time on YouTube

The above figure shows that very few participants are not at all affected or extremely annoyed to see someone spend a lot of time on YouTube. A little more than one fifth of the participants are annoyed a lot and average while a little more than 30% of the participants are little annoyed with someone spending a lot of time on YouTube.

6. Participants easily getting addicted to YouTube:

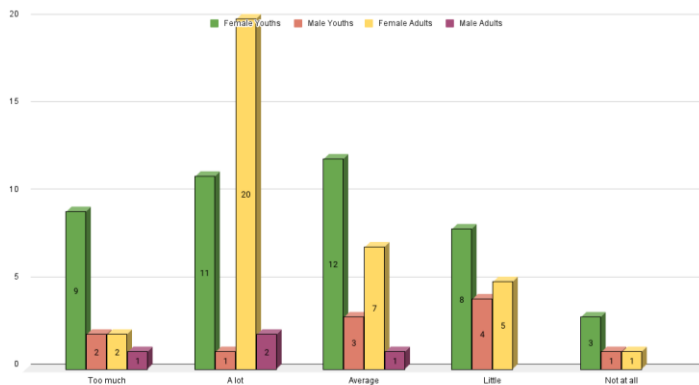


Fig. No. 19 Participants easily addicted to YouTube

Male and female adults feel that a lot of people can get easily addicted to YouTube, while it can be observed from the graph above that the male and female youth feel that not too many people can be easily addicted to YouTube.

7. YouTube having more positive effect than negative:

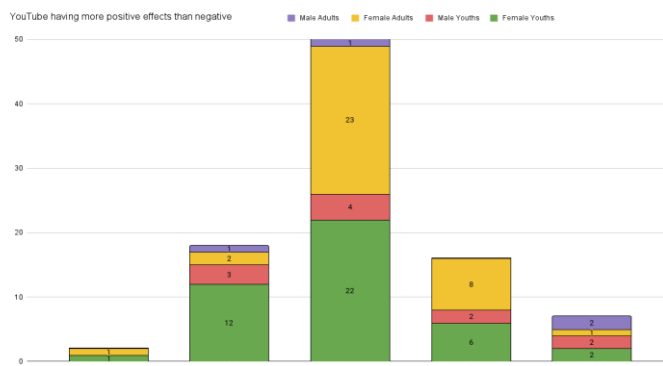


Fig. No. 20 YouTube having more positive effect than negative

From the above figure, it can be noted that almost half the participants responses are average towards YouTube having more positive effects than negative. However, it can also be noted that the one fifth of the participants feel that the positive impact is a lot as compared to its negatives.

8. YouTube having more negative effects than positive:

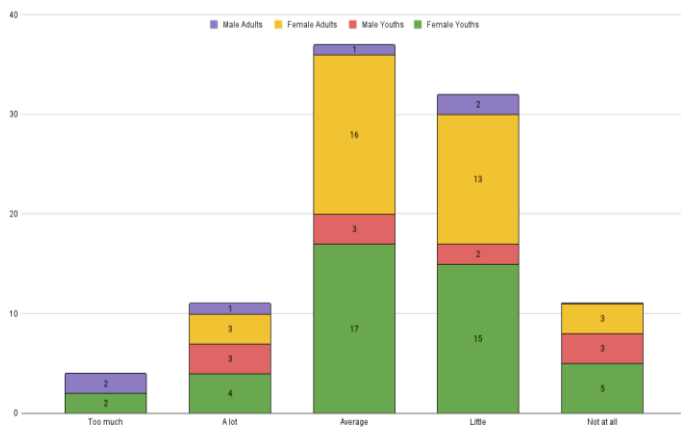


Fig. No. 21 YouTube having more negative effects than positive

The results of this question in the survey form can be collated with the responses of the previous question. The graph indicates that almost 50% of the participant responses are average towards YouTube having more negative effects than positive. However, it can also be noted that almost 35% of the participants feel that there is little negative effect as compared to the positive. On the basis of the responses, YouTube is considered to be a positive tool by most.

9. Productivity of participants suffer while binge watching YouTube videos:

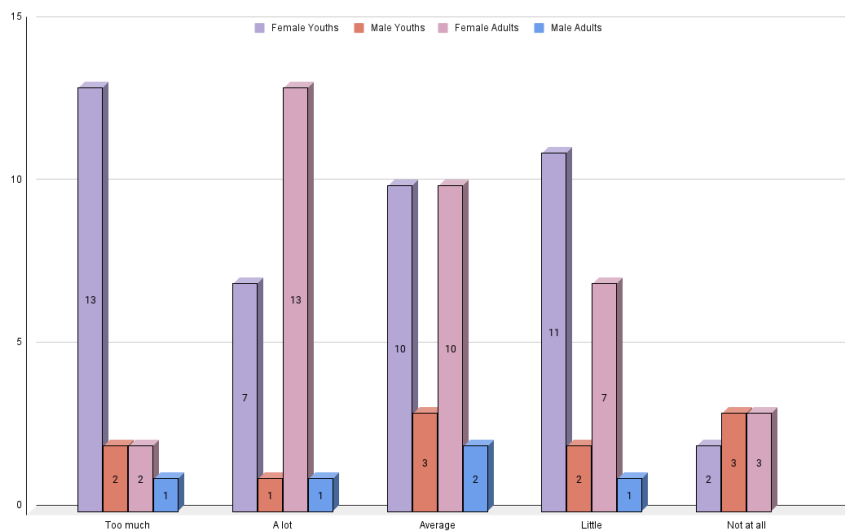


Fig. No. 22 Productivity of participants suffer while binge watching YouTube videos

Female youth and adults feel that the productivity is hampered to a great extent. Only male youth thinks that productivity of participants does not suffer while binge-watching YouTube. This maybe attributed to the Indian setup where the male youth does not contribute much towards household chores and other responsibilities.

Results/Conclusion:

The research has been considered keeping in mind the ease of devices, cheap data services and changing demographic scenario of the society. More and more people use their travel time and any other available time to view content and be connected on their mobile phones. Ease of uploading content and the availability of diverse content, YouTube ensures a convenient platform for all age groups and genders to access the same. YouTube has impacted all the participants irrespective of their age and gender. People of all ages are watching YouTube to learn something new and to get entertained. On an average 5 – 10 hours are spent by each one on a weekly basis viewing content on YouTube. The viewing pattern in this pandemic has changed in comparison to the pre-pandemic times, because of the availability of additional time, saved due to work from home. According to half the participants YouTube can be considered as good source of income and a few participants have their own YouTube channel, however, the participants do not consider YouTube to be a career option. Participants can learn easily and find content as per their interests, which are the main factors why participants watch YouTube. Most the participants believe that YouTube has more positive impacts than negative.

Limitations of the Study:

The survey forms were created using Google Forms in English, and participants who could not understand the language or the technology could not take part in the study. Some participants may not have been comfortable sharing correct information for some of the questions. Uneven sample distribution among age and gender of the participants and the study was restricted to the city of Mumbai.

Future Scope of the Study:

The study can include many more parameters on emotional and psychological impact of YouTube. Similar studies can be undertaken to ascertain the impact of other Social Media Apps like Snap Chat, Instagram, etc. Survey forms can be multi-lingual to tap more participants.

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