Visual Postings on Facebook: A Content Analysis

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Abstract: The paper analyzed contents of Twelve Facebook users from 16th March 2017 to 15th February 2017. Social media such as Facebook allow people to reach out our friends. We can share our status, personal feelings, events, talents, likings and dis-likings. Facebook plays an important role in our life. We spend most of our time in virtual world. The current study mainly employs content analysis method to determine the the way Facebook has changed world of communication. Content analysis of account holders Timeline revealed that Indians share mainly 25 genres of posts: Friendship, Classic Selfie, Software Edited Selfie, Meme, Event, Archive, Memory, News Cutout, Nature, Groupie, Travel, App Link, Kingship, Romance, Mirror Selfie, Compulsory Shared, Humour, Celebrity, Self Photo, News Link, Hair Selfie, Software Edited Groupie, Food, Self Made Art, and Children

IndexTerms **– Social Media, Content Analysis, Facebook Profile, Genres of Images, Visual Post**
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I. INTRODUCTION

New York-based SixDegrees.com launched in 1997, was the first social networking site (SNS) that operated similar to those social networking sites existing today (Social Media, 2013, P 93). The earlier social Internet mainly involved one-to-one or one-to-few conversations, via e-mail or chat, or postings on interest-based group (Social Animals, 2010, P 758). SixDegrees.com integrated several existing software features into a package that closely resembles the later SNS giants, MySpace and Facebook. Social network sites are not unique because they "allow individuals to meet strangers" with common interests but rather they enable users to articulate and make their social network visible. The World Wide Web invented around 1990 is the massive Internet-based technology, which allows browsers such as Internet Explorer to use so-called hyperlinks to discover and access the millions of documents and other resources that exist on the Internet's connected computers (Social Media, 2013, P 95). On an SNS, a user: creates and displays a public or semi-public personal profile; lists other network users to whom they have offline connections; and reads and often comments on pages created and displayed by network friends and friends of friends (Social Animals, 2010, P 758). The initial social networking sites in the United States were places where people could actively network to find 'friends of friends' or as in sites such as Friends Reunited to reconnect with friends. After a while these sites were transformed, largely by their users, into places of more constant interaction; this occurred more between established friends, so the sites became less concerned with expansive networking. In a way, therefore, social networking sites did become social media, if the labels are taken literally. The users of social media are described as 'networked publics', who possessed four main affordances which were persistence, visibility, spreadability and searchability (Miller, Costa, Haynes, McDonald, and Nicolescu, Sinanan, Spyer, Venkatraman and Wang, 2016a, P 10). Social media is the software designed primarily to facilitate social-interaction as the key to draw the public online. Today, social media include social networks such as Facebook that allow people to reach out to friends of friends; the photo-sharing site Pinterest; the collaboratively written Wikipedia encyclopedia; the "user review" sections at retail websites such as Amazon; "virtual worlds" such as "World of Warcraft" where people from around the world meet, compete, collaborate and play adventure games together, and many more (Social Media, 2013, P 83).

Most animals have some kind of social interaction with other member of the same species. Human groups are characterized by the constant flow of verbal and non-verbal communication. The etymology of the term "Communication" is Latin "communicare", which means "sharing" and "transferring." Communication is defined as interaction between individuals, taking place in dyads and in networks (Håkansson &Westander, 2013, pp. 2-3). Visual communication and sonic communication are essential to vast number of species. It presumably has priority over language, because latter is a relative latecomer in human evolution, however long, it may have existed and been preceded by other forms of auditory communication. Visual communication also necessarily has primacy over writing, not least because writing is present in only a small proportion of societies (even if these encompass the majority of the people now living in the world). The most important way in which visual representation differs from language is that, although it is extremely variable. Visuals forms can differ radically in different cultures and can verge on incomprehensively between one culture to another. Pictorial forms relate ultimately to visual perception and to the phenomenal worlds, to which cognition and representation respond interpretively and toward which they point (Baines, 2007, pp.7-8).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims investigating the way Facebook users are using their accounts for visual posting. Following are the research questions that were inquired through Content analysis of the Facebook Accounts:
1. What types of visual posts are popular among users?
2. Does visual posts by males are differing from female users?
3. Does visual posts by young males are differing from middle age males?

4. Does visual posts by married housewives are differing from married unemployed females?
5. Does visual posts by unmarried college female students are differing from unmarried employed females?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology involves content analysis of Facebook Timeline of twelve users, and qualitative analysis of data. Content Analysis is a methodology by which researcher seeks to determine the content of written, verbal, visual or published communication by systematic, objective and qualitative analysis. Berelson (1952, P.18) defined Content Analysis as research technique for the objective, systematic and qualitative description of manifest content of communication.

Out of the 563, friend in Facebook, only 50 Facebook were randomly selected. Out of 50 users, 12 uses were selected based on Judgment Sampling. Judgment Sampling technique is applied small size of samples are required. According to judgment of researcher 12 profiles has been selected out of 50. These samples were further categorised into 6 categories according to researcher's convenience: married housewives (2), married employed females (2), unmarried female college goers (2), unmarried employed females (2), unmarried unemployed males (2), and married employed males (2).

IV. THE STUDY

The present research is Inductive content analysis. According to Morse and Field (1995), in analytic process the researcher strives to make sense of the data and to learn 'what is going

on.' Dey (1993) further added that in inductive content analysis while reading the data following questions are dealt with:

*   Who is telling?
*   Where is this happening?
*   When did it happen?
*   Why?

In current study, following twelve Facebook accounts are analyzed.

Table 1 Descriptive statics about Facebook users

Name of Account Holders	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Total Post
Aaditi Debnath	F	30-40 yrs	Married	50
Arani Banerjee	M	20-30yrs	Married	723
Arnab Banerjee	M	35-45yrs	Married	109
Biswait Das	M	35-45yrs	Married	218
Pritisha Ghosh	F	30-40yrs	Married	18
Priyanka Saha	F	20-30yrs	Unmarried	151
Rimo Bose	F	20-30yrs	Unmarried	90
Rumela Ghosh	F	20-30yrs	Unmarried	57
Sandhya Golder	F	25-35yrs	Married	265
Shaoli Dutta	F	25-35yrs	Married	81
Subho Mohanto	M	20-30yrs	Unmarried	25
Sumana Paul	F	20-30yrs	Unmarried	187

Time Period: Users activities from 16th March 2017 to 15th February 2017 are analyzed.

RQ1: What types of visual posts are popular among users?
Wang (2016, pp 57-95) identified 15 main genres of images by the Chinese users. An inspection of the huge amount of visual postings on rural migrants' social media profile suggested the genres of visual material: relationships; selfies; trivia; compulsorily shared; chicken soup for the soul; humour; fantasy; children; travel; events; archive; political; food; anti-mainstream; and commercial.

RQ2: Does visual posts by males are differing from female users?

Table 2 Statics about difference between males and females in posing visually

	Male	Female
Total Visual Posts	1075	899
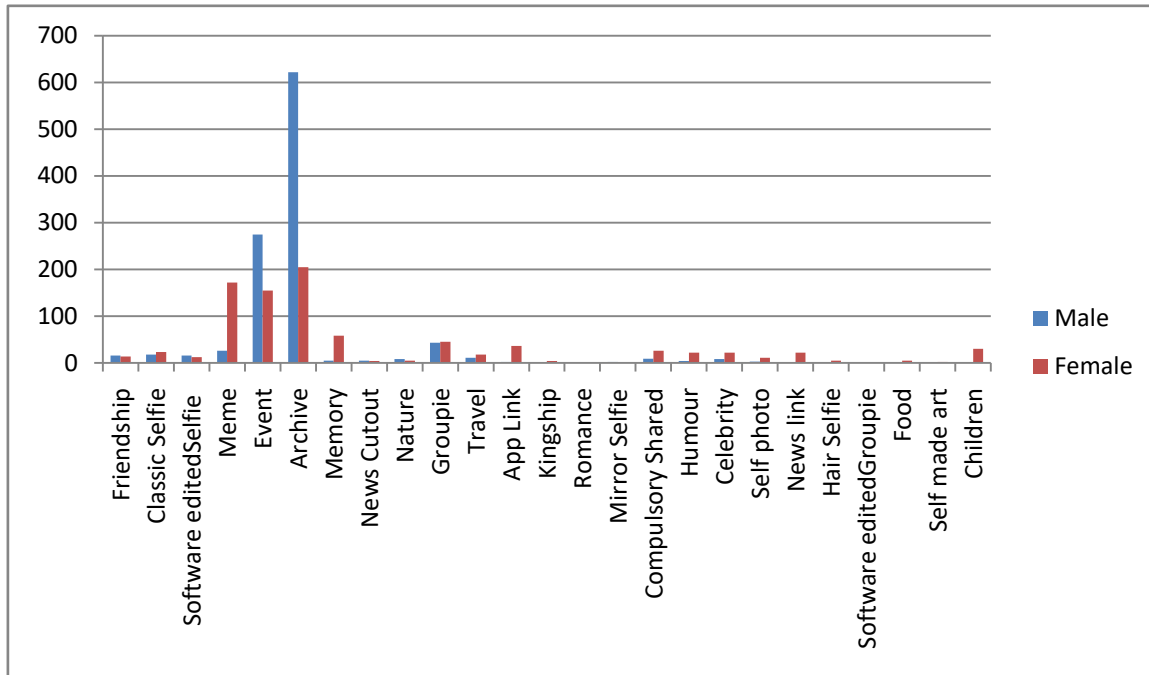
The analysis of data revealed that types of posts on Facebook are more or less same. By comparing the accounts, it had been found that Female account holders publish or share News links in greater number, whereas male account holders don't share any news links.

*RQ3*: Does visual posts by young males are differing from middle age males?

For the above research question, Facebook accounts of young males and middle –age males are separately examined. The content of Facebook timelines of both Subho Mohanto and Arani Banerjee are studied for gathering information about young males. Timelines of Arnab Banerjee and Biswait Das are examined for analyzing information about middle age males.

Comparison of Visual Posts between Unmarried and Married Males
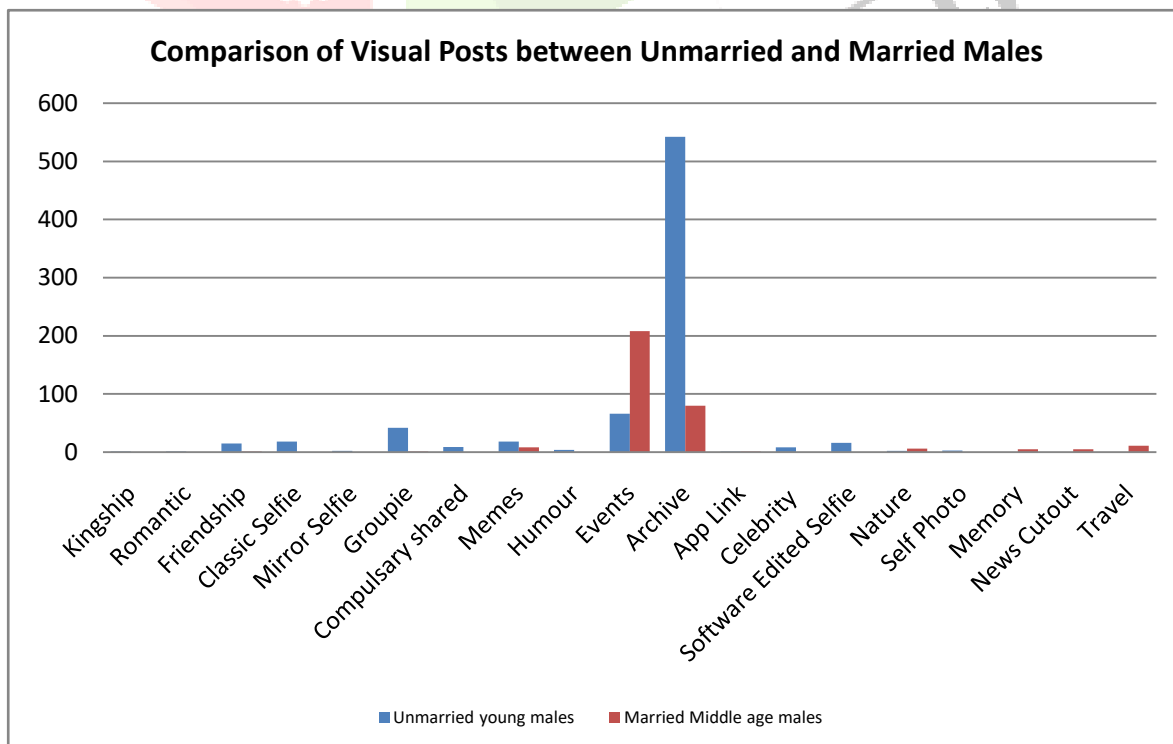
Data of content analysis revealed following results:

- Visual posts shared by unmarried males are approximately two times of posts shared by married males. Married males shared 327 posts whereas unmarried males shared 748 posts.
- Posts about Romance and Friendship are mostly shared by unmarried males. While married males shared posts about various events.
- Selfies and software edited selfies are largely shared by young males. But Selfie are not so common for married employed males. So, images of self representation are important for young males.

RQ4: Does visual posts by married housewives are differing from married employed females?

Comparison of Visual Posts between Married Housewives and Married Employed Females
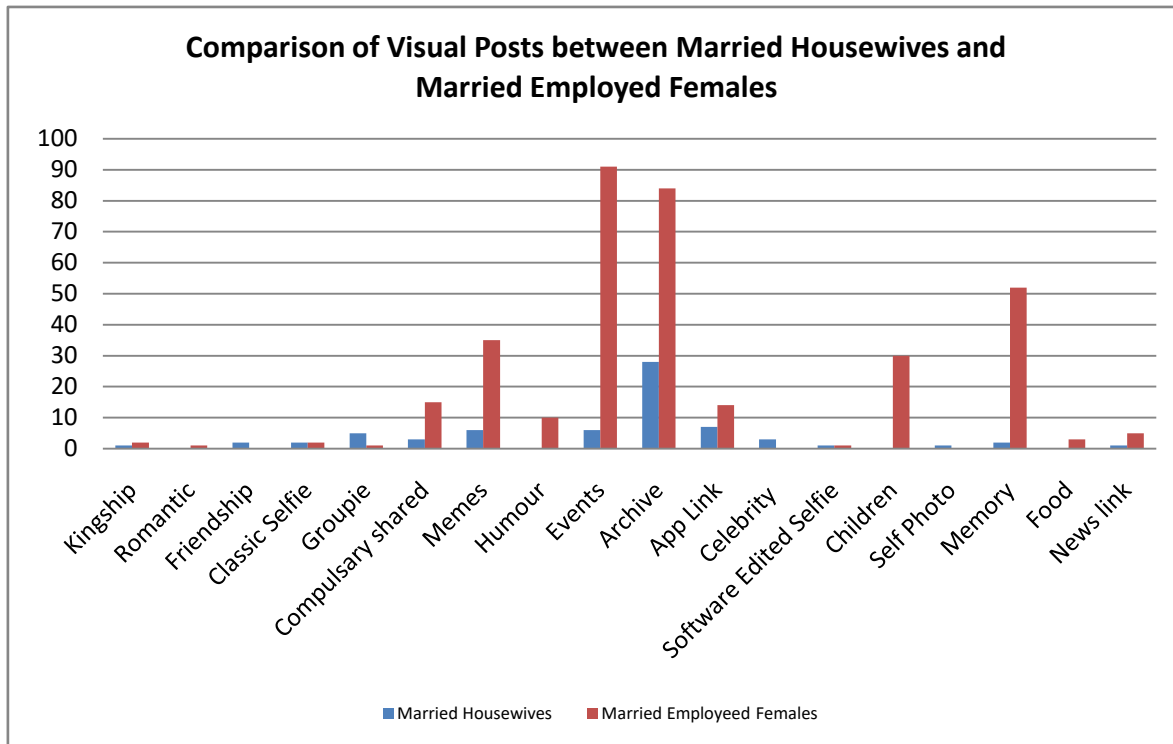
Self-representations of females are quite different from male Facebook users. Unmarried women mostly upload selfies edited by beauty-enhancing apps. Pregnant women often become less visible on social platform, representing a transition from public life to private motherhood. Women from conservative backgrounds often use fake profile pictures and fake names to avoid been seen by male relatives.

Public- facing social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or QQ provide a space for the conscious construction of appearance, performing the self or, as in the south Indian case, the family (Miller, Costa, Haynes, McDonald, and Nicolescu, Sinanan, Spyer, Venkatraman and Wang, 2016b, P 118). Both married housewives and employed females publish posts about friendship, kingship, self representations, events and memes regularly.

RQ5: Does visual posts by unmarried college female students are differing from unmarried employed females?

Comparison of Visual Posts between unmarried female students and unmarried employed females
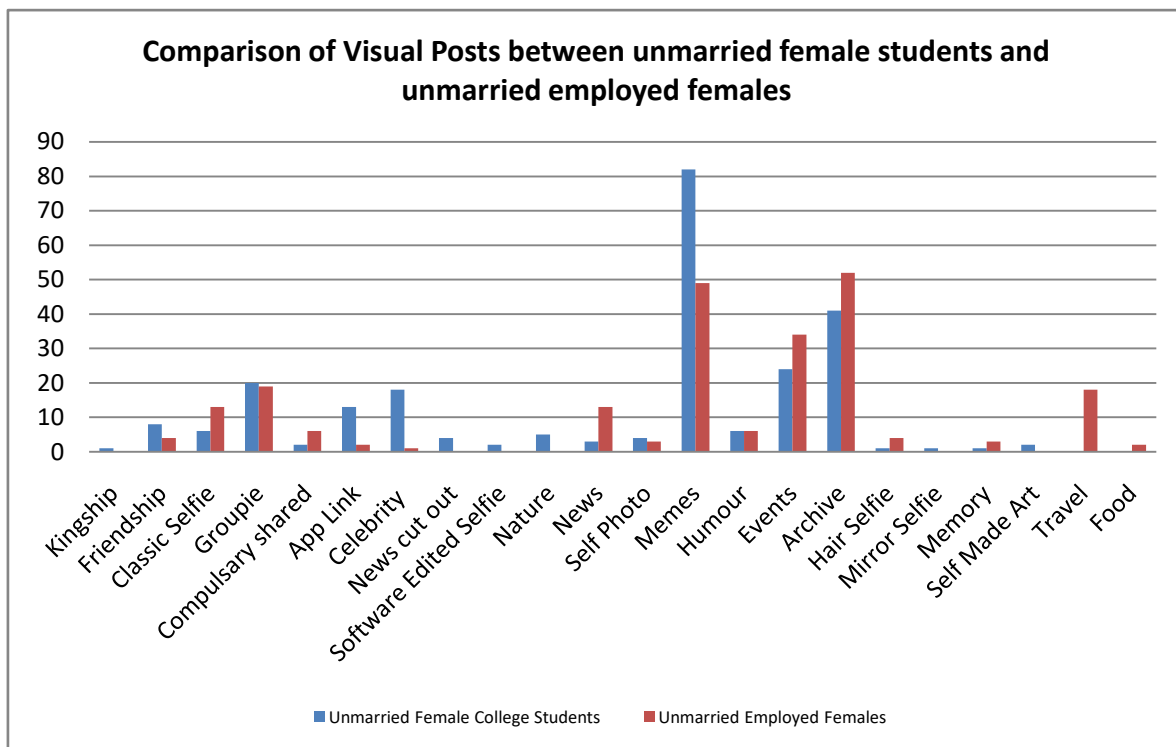
Both unmarried college female students and unmarried employed females mainly upload and share posts about Kingship and Friendship. Number of Selfie and Groupie are nearly same. Unmarried female college students upload or share Memes more than unmarried employed females. Unmarried employed females upload and share post about events and archives more than unmarried female college students. Unmarried employed females post about their trips and travel at large number in comparison to unmarried female college students.

V. CONCLUSION

The current study analyzed twelve Facebook accounts, out of which 8 were accounts of females and 4 were of males. This can be the limitation of the study as the ratio between the female samples and male samples is 2:1. The study could employ better and equal result if the ratio would be 1:1. Still, the data yielded quite authentic result. As the post uploaded by the males are greater in number than the females. This means though the number of male accounts studied for research is lesser than female accounts; it didn't affect the number of posts uploaded by them. The total number of uploads by 4 males is 1075, whereas uploads by 8 males is 899. This reveals that males are more active than female Facebook accouter holders. Males share posts about archives and events in large number in comparison to females. They actively share their events and past memories more than females. Chinese researcher Wang identified 15 genres of images are posted by Chinese. The current study revealed that Indians share these 15 genres too. In addition to these, we also share various application links and software edited photographs. Facebook is a platform where we share our status, personal feelings, events, talents, likings and dis-likings. Now days, various apps and software permitted us to publish ourselves in better way.

VI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Apart from the total number of males and females sampled for content analysis, the research paper has other limitation too. Out of 563 profiles only 12 are selected through judgment sampling. If a larger number of profiles could had been studied if might yield a different result. Samples are selected on non-probability basis as all profiles are known to the researcher, if unknown profiles would had been selected, it also might give different result and conclusion.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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IX. APPENDIX

Table 3 Statics about different types of posts uploaded by males and females

Types of posts	Male	Female
Friendship	16	14
Classic Selfie	18	23
Software edited Selfie	16	12
Meme	26	172
Event	275	155
Archive	622	205
Memory	5	58
News Cutout	5	4
Nature	8	5
Groupie	43	45
Travel	11	18
App Link	2	36
Kingship	1	4
Romance	1	1
Mirror Selfie	2	1
Compulsory Shared	9	26
Humour	4	22
Celebrity	8	22
Self photo	3	11
News link		22
Hair Selfie		5
Software edited Groupie		1
Food		5
Self made art		2
Children		30

Table 4 Comparison of Visual Posts between Unmarried and Married Males

Comparison	Unmarried young males	Married Middle age males
Kingship	1	
Romantic	1	
Friendship	15	1
Classic Selfie	18	
Mirror Selfie	2	

Groupie	42	1
Compulsary shared	9	
Memes	18	8
Humour	4	
Events	66	208
Archive	542	80
App Link	1	1
Celebrity	8	
Software Edited Selfie	16	
Nature	2	6
Self Photo	3	
Memory		5
News Cutout		5
Travel		11

Table 5 Comparison of Visual Posts between Married Housewives and Married Employed Females

Kingship	1	2
Romantic		1
Friendship	2	
Classic Selfie	2	2
Groupie	5	1
Compulsary shared	3	15
Memes	6	35
Humour		10
Events	6	91
Archive	28	84
App Link	7	14
Celebrity	3	
Software Edited Selfie	1	1
Children		30
Self Photo	1	
Memory	2	52
Food		3
News link	1	5

Table 6 Comparison of Visual Posts between unmarried female students and unmarried employed females

Comparison	Unmarried Female College Students	Unmarried Employed Females
Kingship	1	
Friendship	8	4
Classic Selfie	6	13
Groupie	20	19
Compulsary shared	2	6
App Link	13	2
Celebrity	18	1
News cut out	4	
Software Edited Selfie	2	
Nature	5	

News	3	13
Self Photo	4	3
Memes	82	49
Humour	6	6
Events	24	34
Archive	41	52
Hair Selfie	1	4
Mirror Selfie	1	
Memory	1	3
Self Made Art	2	
Travel		18
Food		2