A Study on Virtual Communication v/s Face- to- Face Communication Among College Students in Hyderabad City

V. Kavya[1]
K. Ravi Kumar[2]

1. V. Kavya, Student - M.A., Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, St Francis College for Women, Begumpet, Hyderabad-16
2. K. Ravi Kumar M.A., M.Sc., Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, St Francis College for women, Begumpet, Hyderabd-16

ABSTRACT

21st century Information technology is characterised by quick access to information at a click of a button and instant communication; the distance is shortened with the small screen (video calls, skype etc.); Big screen is minimized with small screen; chatting and commenting are on upsurge; Sharing and receiving are escalating. Stay connected has become the buzzword. The saturation has lead to Virtual communication. Online is the order of the day. This has an effect on face to face communication which is evading eventually among college students. Therefore, it becomes interesting to know the significant roles played by virtual and face to face communication in a student's life. Basing this point, the researcher set out to study the role of virtual v/s face to face communication among college students in Hyderabad. The research design chosen for this study is a descriptive design. The tool for the data collection used by the researcher was questionnaire. In this method, a set of questions were used for collecting data. The study reveals that majority of the Students preferred online communication after college hours. According to the respondents, face to face communication has the strong emotional bond. Most of the Students believed that both online and face to face communication helped in strengthening their relationship with their friends.

Keywords : Information Technology, Virtual communication, Face-face communication, Emotional bond, Relationship.

I. INTRODUCTION

21st century Information technology is characterised by quick access to information at a click of a button and instant communication; the distance is shortened with the small screen (video calls, skype etc.); Big screen is minimized with small screen; chatting and commenting are on upsurge; Sharing and receiving are escalating. Stay connected has become the buzzword. The saturation has lead to Virtual communication. Online is the order of the day. This has an effect on face to face communication which is evading eventually among college students. To begin with, Virtual communication is a mediated communication. it refers to any technology people use to communicate with each other when they cannot be present face to face. It favours the ability to see and hear one another in real time, simulating the experience of a physical visit. It provides realistic communication experience. It could take various forms such as web pages, emails, forums, text and instant messaging, social networking and video chat. On the other hand, Face to face communication means the informal discussion among the people. When one person discusses his or her views, opinions to another and exchanges his or her views in the presence of each other then it is called face to face conversation. It includes the face-to-face discussion on a particular issue. In this method both the information receiver and sender can exchange their views freely and fairly. Therefore, it becomes interesting to know the significant roles played by virtual and face to face communication in a student's life as the access to the internet is on upsurge.

II.AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM : The aim of the study is to understand the significance of virtual v/s face to face communication in a student's life

OBJECTIVES :

1. To study the preferred mode of communication i.e., virtual communication or face to face communication by the students.
2. To study the association between the profile of respondents and the mode of communication they prefer.

III.METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. It is a fact- finding investigation with adequate interpretation. It is more specific as it focuses on the particular aspect of the problem being studied. The quantitative method is chosen to do the study. It is done in the form of survey method with the tool - questionnaire. The area selected for this study is confined to the students between the age group16-22 years selected from different colleges in Hyderabad. A simple random method was used to collect the data.

IV.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a study conducted by **WONG Sze Wing Wing** in May **2008**, at the city university of Hong Kong, it was observed that people who communicate online with their real-life friends would have a better real-life friendship quality. It reflects that online communication is an auxiliary tool to keep up with friends aside from face to face communication. In a study by **Martha Perry** in **2010** at University of Kentucky, it was analysed that people who prefer virtual communication and the people who prefer real communication were equal in the ratio. In a study done by **Rebecca Schaefer** in **2011** at university of western Kentucky, it was shown that most of the college students prefer face to face communication over virtual communication. However, there is only a small gap between people who prefer face to face communication and those who prefer virtual communication. It suggests that virtual communication has widely become the substitute for face to face communication.In a study by **John Drussel** in **2012** at St. Catherine University, it was found out that people showed strong attitudes towards online communication.In a study conducted by **Scott P, Shannon Bradley, Ashley Burnette, and Lesley L. Medley at Florida Gulf Coast University, USA** in **2013**, it was revealed that most of the respondents preferred virtual communication due their inability to communicate in reality or isolation.In a study *"social media and changing communication patterns" by* **Dr Kiran Bala,** *at* Jagannath International Management School, it was observed that social media is going to be next big challenge for the different aspects of our social and personal lives. Social media is creating a new kind of social order it is strengthening social network but weakening inter-personal

relations. But becoming a new form of addiction for younger generation because of an age of over communication (24 hrs messaging and chat) and alienation on the other hand (leading to psychological disorder).

V. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
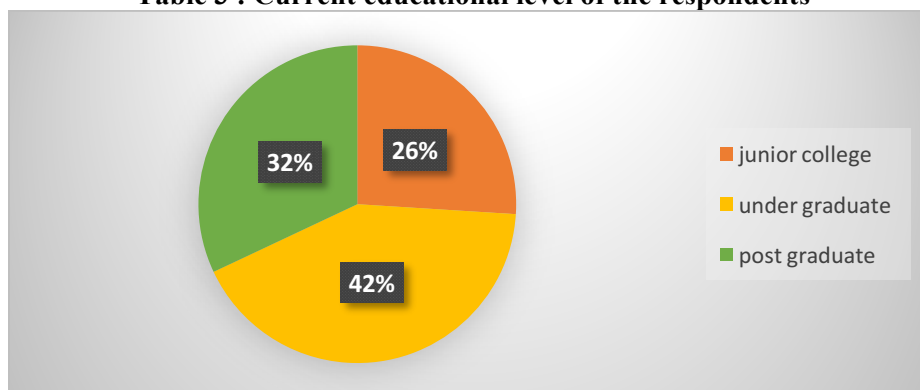
Table 1: Age of the respondents
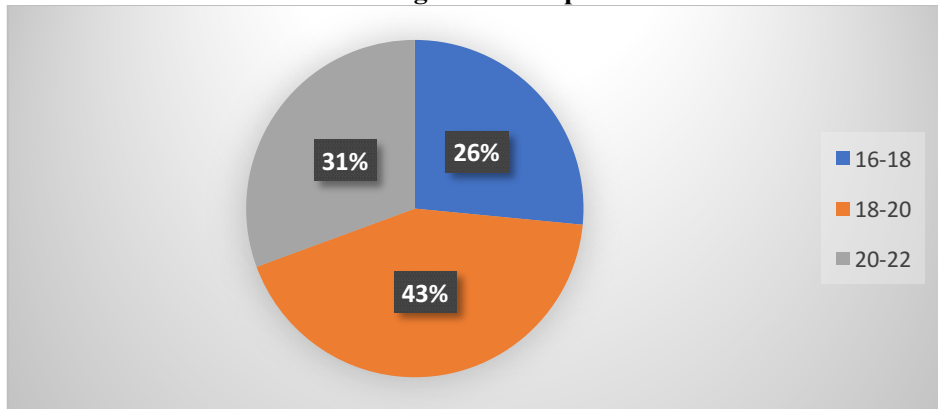
From the above table it can be inferred that the highest percentage of the respondents comes under the age group 18-20 (i. e 43%) and the least percentage of the respondents fall under the age group of 16-18(i. e 26%) and the rest 31% of the respondents fall under the age group of 20-22.
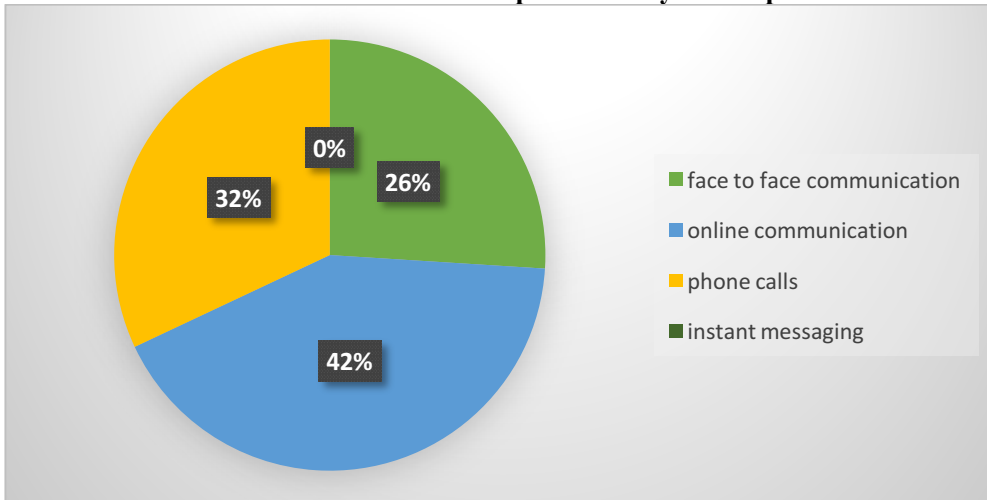
Table 2: Gender of the respondents
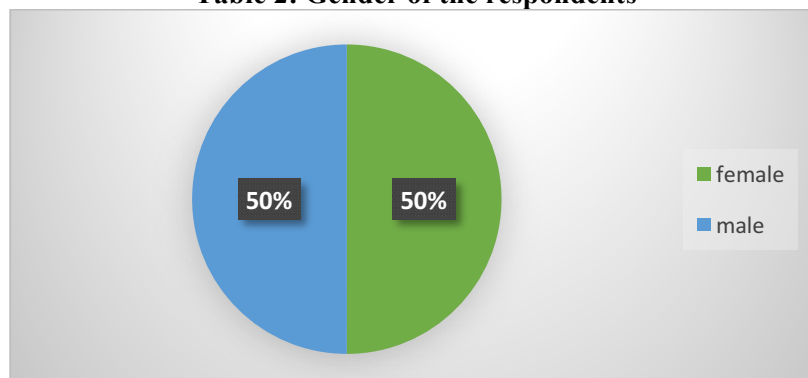
The above table shows the gender of the respondents. From the above table it can be inferred that half of the sample (25%) comes under the category of male and the other half (25%) comes under the category of female.

**Table 3 : Current educational level of the respondents**

As the name suggests, the above table refers to the educational qualification of the respondents. From the table, it can be inferred that 42% of the sample under the category of under graduation. It is seen that 32% of the respondents comes under the category of Post-graduation and small fraction 26% of the respondents belong to the junior college.

**Table 4: communication mode preferred by the respondents**

The above table shows the communication mode preferred by the respondents. It can be inferred that the highest percentage i. e, 42% of the respondents prefer online communication and 32% of respondents prefer communication over phone calls. It can be observed that only 26% of the respondents prefer face to face communication and none of the respondents considered instant messaging as a mode of communication.

**Table 5 : Time spent by the respondents on social media**
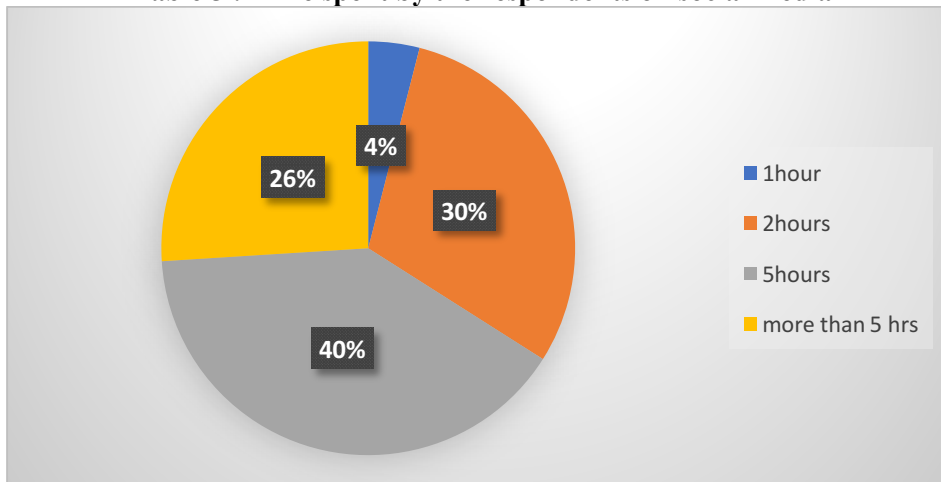
When asked about time spent on social media, the highest percentage of the respondents i. e 40% said they spend 5 hours on social media, whereas 30% of the respondents spend 2 hours. It can be observed that 26% spend more than 5 hours and only 4 % of the respondents spend just 1 hour over social media.

Table 6: Choice of social media applications of the respondents to communicate online
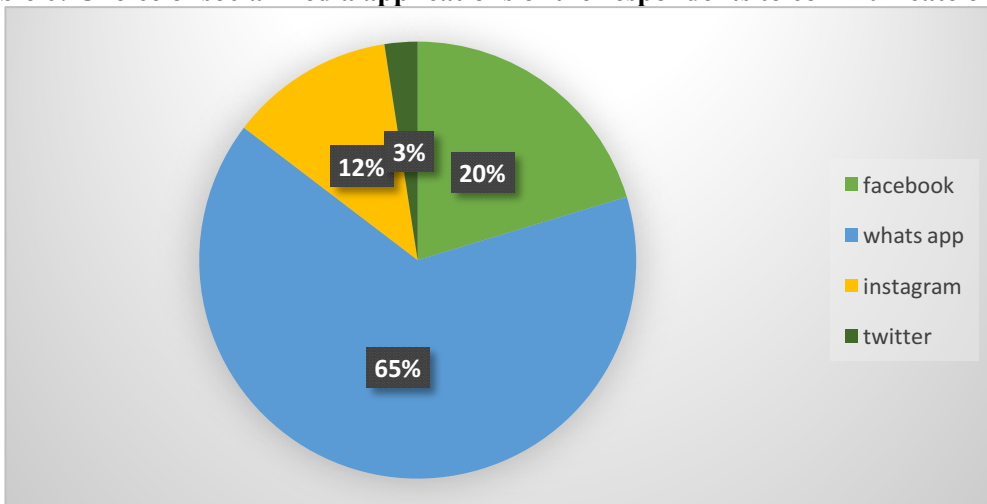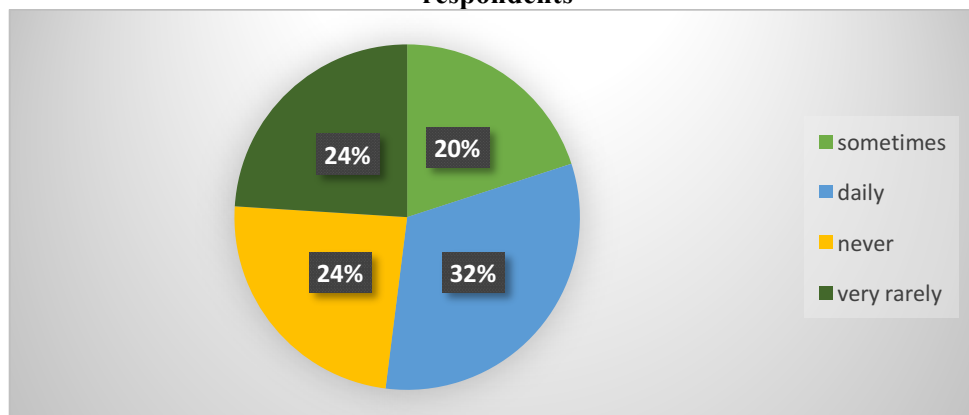
The above table shows the choice of social media applications of the respondents to communicate online. From the above table it can be inferred that more than half of the respondents i. e 65% prefer what's app while 20% prefer Facebook. While 12% of the respondents use Instagram, only 3% of the respondents use twitter to communicate online.

Table 7 : Device used by the respondents to communicate online
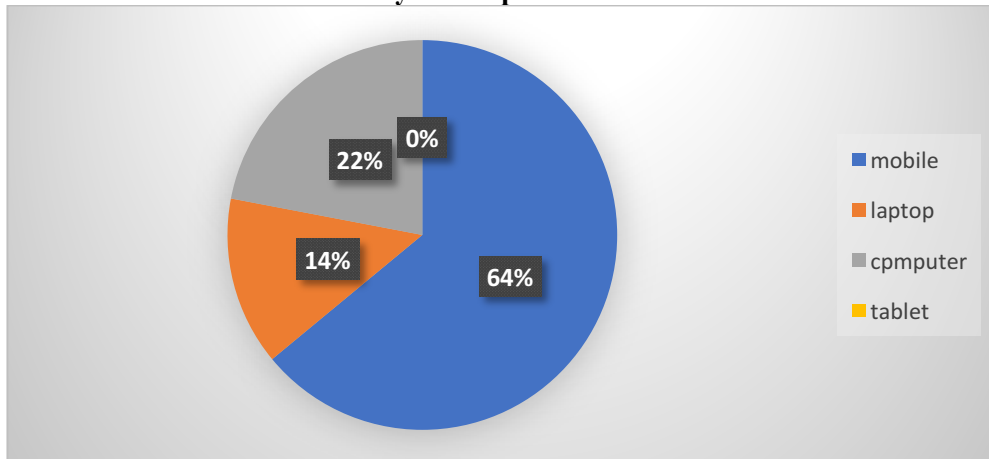

This table shows the device used by the respondents to communicate online. It can be inferred from the table that more than half of the respondents i. e 64% use mobile for online communication. 22% of the sample use computer. While only 14% prefer laptops for online communication none of them considered tablets.

Table 8 : Periodicity of the usage of instant messaging other than social media by the respondents
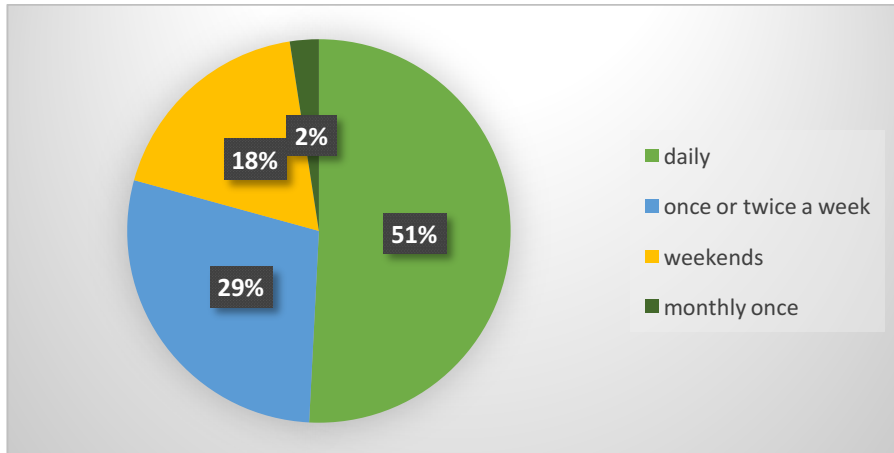

The above table shows the periodicity of the usage of instant messaging over social media by the respondents. It can be inferred that the highest percentage of the sample i. e 32% use instant messaging daily and 24% never used instant messaging.

Table 9: Usage of online communication by the respondents to make new friends
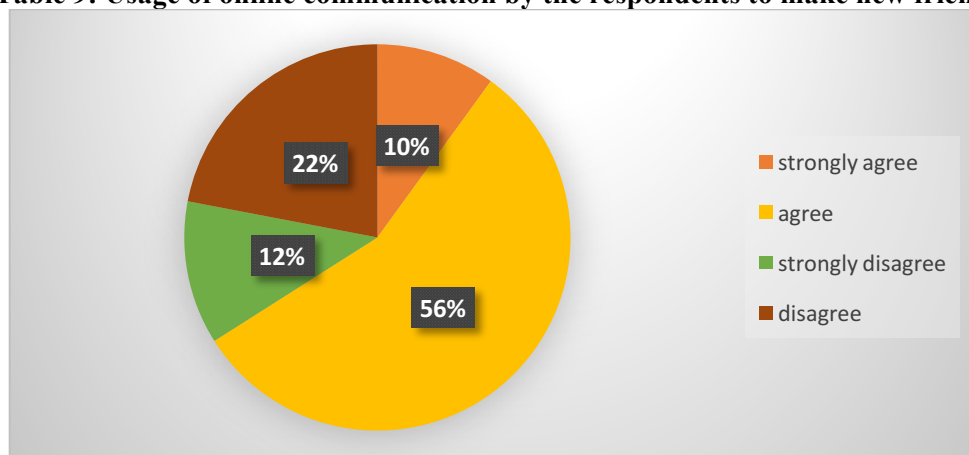
When asked about using online communication to make new friends, more than half of the respondents i. e 56% agreed that they use online communication to make new friends and 22% disagreed on the same. While 12% strongly disagreed on using social media to make new friends only 10% strongly agreed on this fact.

Table 10: Periodicity of the usage of social media by the respondents to communicate with existing friends


The above table shows the periodicity of social media by the respondents to communicate with existing friends. It can be inferred that 51% use social media daily to communicate with existing friends while 29% use it only once or twice a week. 18% of the sample said that they use social media during weekends and only 2% of the respondents use social media once in a month to communicate with existing friends.

Table 11: Belief of respondents that communicating few topics is easy through social media compared to face to face
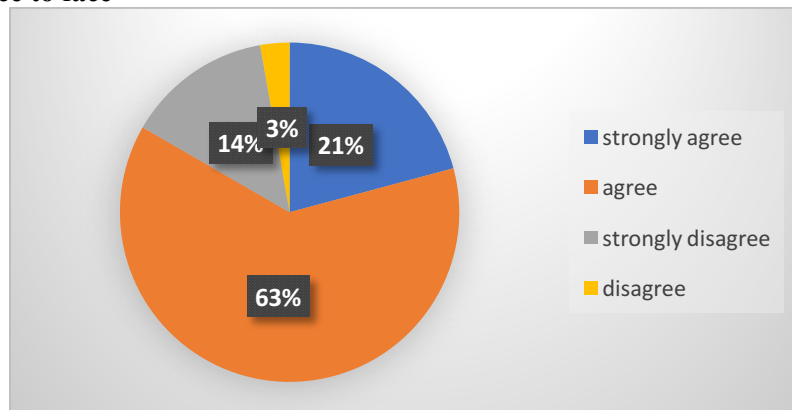

The above table represents belief of respondents that communication of few topics is easy through social media compared to face to face. The highest percentage of respondents i. e 63% agree on the fact that communicating few topics is easy through social media compared to face to face communication while 21%strongly agree. It can be observed that 14% strongly disagree and only 2% disagree that few topics are easy to communicate over social media.

Table 12 : Belief of the respondents on social media strengthening relationship with friends
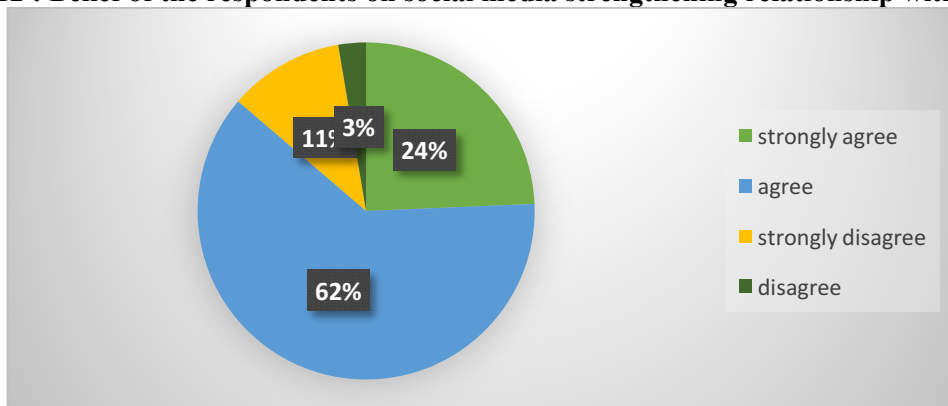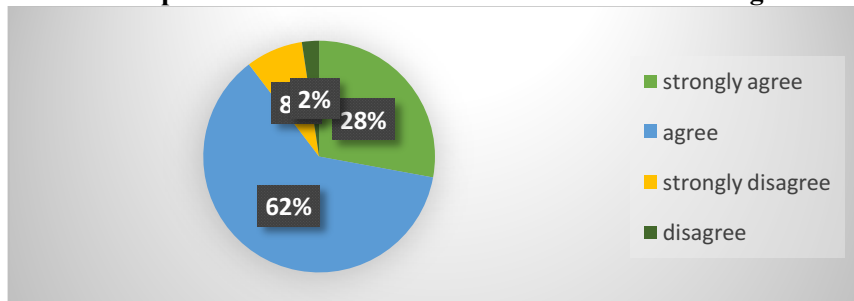
The above table shows the belief of the respondents on social media strengthening relationship with friends. More than half of the sample i. e 62% agree that social media strengthens relation with friends while 24% strongly agree on this fact. It can be observed that very less percentage of the respondents i. e 11% strongly disagree and only 3% of the respondents disagree on the fact that social media strengthens relationship with friends.

**Table 13: Topics of the respondents to communicate online with friends**
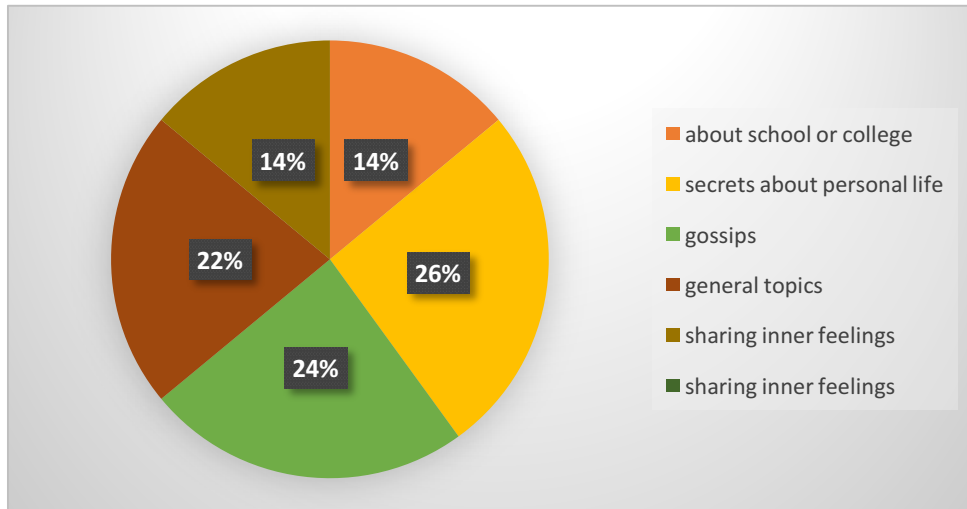
When asked about topics used by the respondents to communicate online with their friends, 32% of the respondents said they discuss secrets about personal life with friends, while 30% of the sample discuss gossips. 18% of the respondents use social media to discuss about school or college and 17% of respondents shared their inner feelings with friends on social media. Only 3% of the sample used social media to discuss general topics with friends.

Table 14: Belief of the respondents on face to face communication making relationship stronger

The above table shows the belief of respondents on face to face communication making relationship stronger. From the table it can be inferred that majority of the respondents i. e 62% agree that face to face communication makes relation strong with friends compared to social media while 28% strongly agree. It is observed that very less percentage of the sample disagree on the fact that face to face communication makes relation with friends strong (disagree 2%, strongly disagree 8%).

Table 15: Part of the day preferred by the respondents to use social media
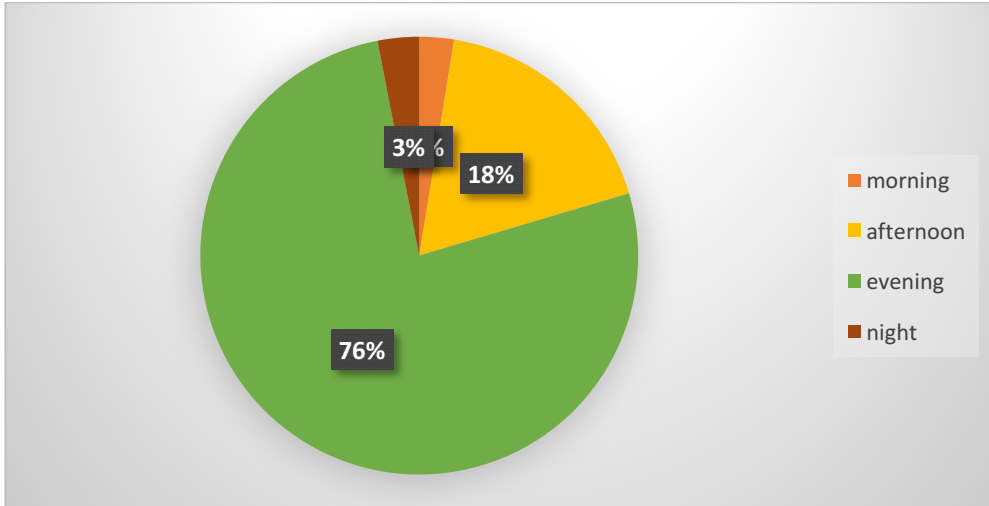
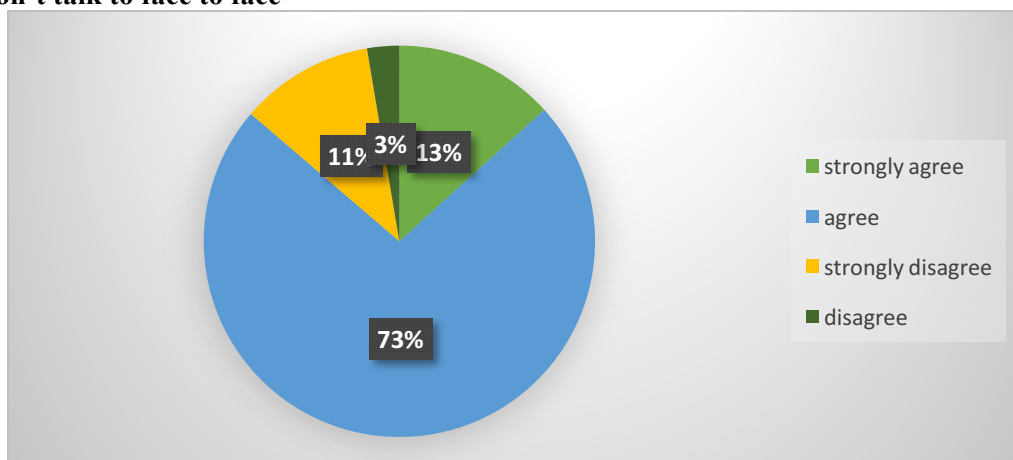The above table shows the part of the day preferred by the respondents to use social media. From the above table it can be inferred that majority of the respondents i. e 76% use social media in the evening times while 18% use it during afternoon. It can be observed that only less percentage of the respondents i. e 3% use social media during morning and night to communicate with friends.

Table 16 : Money spent per month by the respondents for online communication
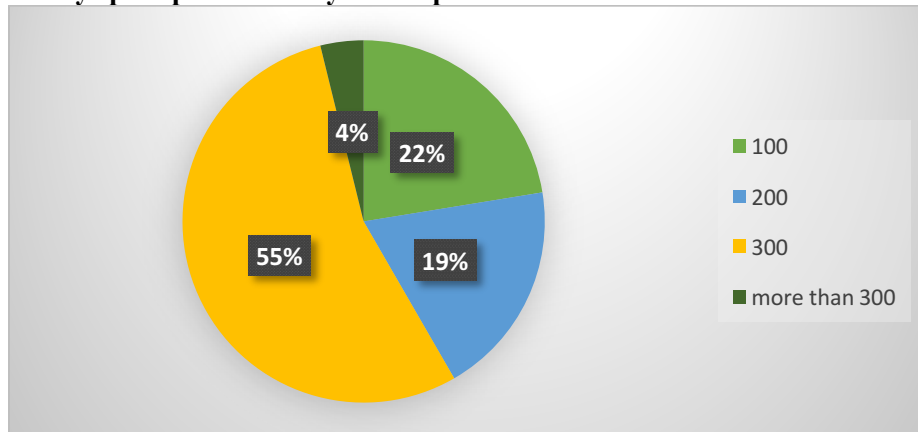
The above table shows the money spent by the respondents per month for online communication. It can be inferred that more than half of the respondents i. e 55% spend 300 per month while 22% spend only 100. It is also observed that 19% of the respondents spend 200 and only 4% spend more than 300 per month for online communication.

Table 17 : Belief of the respondents on using social media to communicate with people to whom they don't talk to face to face
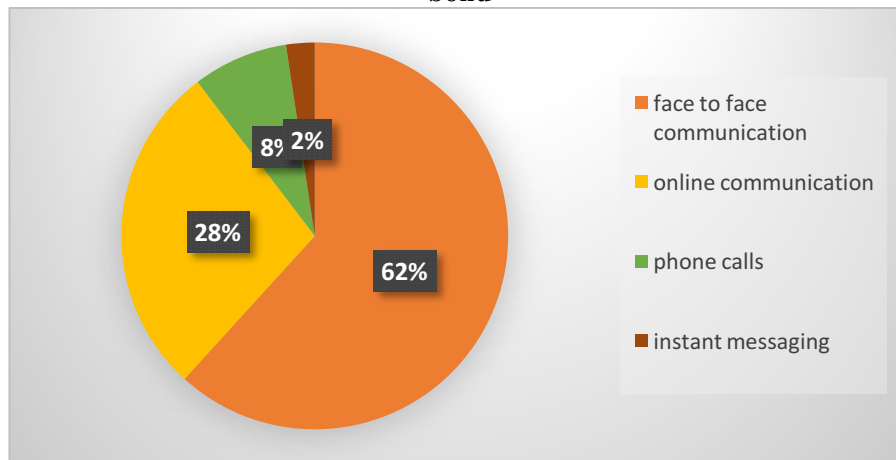

The above table shows the belief of the respondents on using social media to communicate with people to whom they don't talk face to face. From the table it can be inferred that majority of the respondents i. e 73% agree on the fact that they use social media to communicate with those they don't talk face to face, 13% of the respondents

strongly agree. It can be observed that very little percentage of the respondents disagree (11% strongly disagree and 3% disagree) on using social media to communicate with people to whom they don't talk face to face.

Table 18 : Preference of communication mode of the respondents on having strong emotional bond

The above table shows the preference of communication mode by the respondents on having strong emotional bond. From the table it can be inferred that more than half percentage of the respondents i. e 62% believe that face to face communication has strong emotional bond while 28% think that online communication has strong emotional bond. It can be observed that very less percentages of the population i. e 8% think phone calls have strong emotional bond whereas only 2% of the sample believe that instant messaging have strong emotional bond.

Table 19: Belief of respondents on importance of using signs and gestures in face to face communication
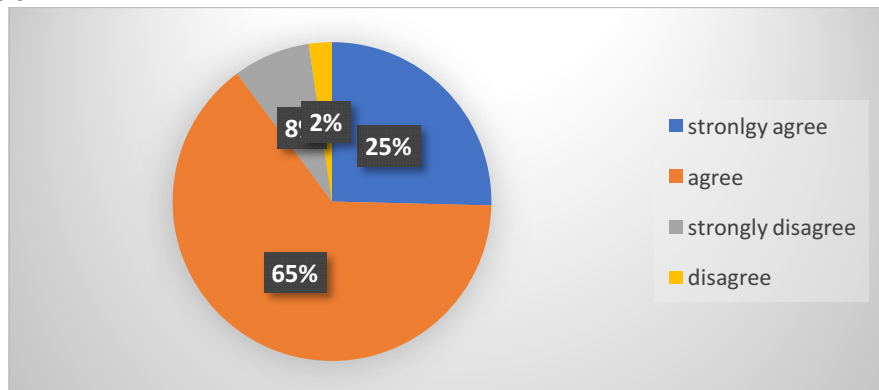
The above table shows the belief of respondents on importance of using signs and gestures in face to face communication. From the above table it can be inferred that majority of the respondents i. e 65% agree that using signs and gestures is sometimes very important in face to face communication while 25% strongly agree on this fact. Very little percent of respondents disagree (8% strongly disagree and 2% disagree) that using signs and gestures is sometimes important in face to face communication.

VI.RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

General profile : Equal number of male and female students were the part of the survey. It was conducted to know the communication mode preferred by the students and their opinion on face to face and virtual communication. According to the research 58% of the respondents use devices for communication.

Virtual communication : Most of the respondents spend a lot of time on social media at least 5 hours for online communication. From the survey it was found that majority of the respondents (65%) used What's app for communicating with friends while 20% preferred Facebook followed by Instagram (12%) and twitter (3%). As mobiles are trending these days majority of the respondents used mobiles for online communication and only few people used laptops and computers for the same purpose. Instant messaging was used by 32% of the respondents on a daily basis while 24% said that they use it very rarely or never used it. Online communication being the mode preferred by most of the students these days, 56% of the respondents agreed on the fact that they use social media to make new friends, rest of them disagreed on this fact. While 51% of the respondents used online communication

daily to communicate with their existing friends, few said they used it once or twice a week followed by others who said that they used it only on weekends. Most of the students used social media to share secrets about personal life and gossips with friends while few people discuss about college topics or general topics and shared their inner feelings. Majority of the students used social media during evenings and only few used it in the morning and night times. Students spend a good amount of money for online communication and 40% of the respondents feel that online communication has partially improved their language besides other students who feel that online communication had no influence on their language. Many students agreed on the fact that they use online communication to communicate with those to whom they don't talk face to face.

Face to face communication : Majority of the respondents i.e. 62% agree that face to face communication makes relationship stronger while only few of them disagree on this fact.62% of the students personally feel that face to face communication has the strong emotional mode compared to other modes of communication. According to most of the students, use of signs and gestures are very important in face to face communication sometimes to convey the message to the opposite person.

VII.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
The sample size was restricted to 50 respondents due to time constraints. The area of the study was restricted to the city of Hyderabad. Collection of data from youngsters was major problem during the study. The research method was restricted to quantitative analysis due to lack of time.

VIII.CONCLUSION

From the survey conducted by the researcher it is observed that majority of the respondents preferred online communication and spent at least 5 hours daily to interact with their friends and make new friends. Internet made it possible for them to use different applications like what's app and facebook even on the mobile and made it easier for them to communicate online. Few students feel more comfortable to discuss some topics and share their feelings through online communication compared to face to face communication. Majority of the Students preferred online communication after college hours. According to the respondents face to face communication has the strong emotional bond. Most of the Students believed that both online and face to face communication helped in strengthening their relationship with their friends. Students are spending good amount of money on recharge of their mobiles with internet connection in order to communicate online with their friends and make new friends while doing other activities like web surfing, listening to music and doing college work. Most of the students used online communication to share secrets about personal life and gossips while a few of them used to discuss about school or college and share their inner feelings. Thus it can be observed that the students use online communication after college due to lack of time they spend with their friends during college hours and lack of atmospheric comfort and also because mobile communication is trendy. Majority of the students used online communication to extend their friendly relations and spend more time with their friends. It also helps introvert people in expressing their views but most of them personally liked face to face communication because of the emotional bond it carries.

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