

An empirical study to analyse the awareness and influence of User Generated Content on Facebook

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Abstract:

1.1: An Introduction To Facebook:

As Facebook celebrates its fourteenth anniversary in 2018, with more than 2.19 billion monthly active users using this platform (*statista.com, 2018*), has become the largest social network site in the world. The number of active users in India has surpassed a figure of 194.11 million in 2017 and is expected to reach 262 million by 2020 (*statista.com, 2018*). The site has users of different age groups and cultures hailing from different parts of the world (*Emil Protalinski, 2012*). Facebook offers different facilities to companies' like- free profile page to post their product and services and invite fans to respond with comments. Facebook also encouraged third-party developers to develop applications which included games, live video features and events to attract the Facebook users (*C.J Arlotta, 2011*).

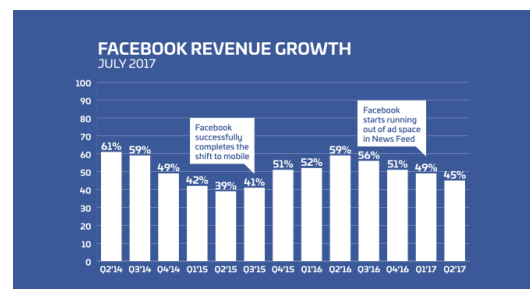


Figure 1.1: Facebook Revenue Growth- 2017

Source- Techcrunch.com

In 2017, Facebook earned revenue of \$40,653,000,000 out of which a major amount of \$39,942,000,000 came from digital advertising (*Rakesh Sharma, Investopedia*) over the world. The figures sore up in the first quarter of 2018, and the total advertising revenue earned by Facebook amounted to be 11.8 billion U.S dollars. Payments and other fees generated 171 million U.S. dollars in revenues (*Statistica.com*) all over the world.. Facebook has been updating its features and adding new and innovative ideas to keep its users intact with the platform and at the same time keep itself abreast with its competitors.

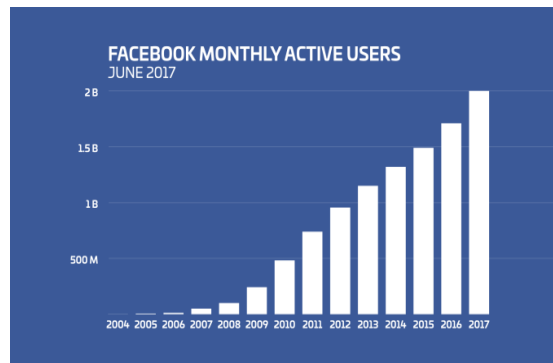


Figure 1.2: Facebook Monthly Active Users-2017

Source- Creamconsultancy.co.uk

The number of active users of social networking sites is expected to increase to 336 million by 2020 and majority of the users are using Facebook for different purposes. According to statistics of 2016, there were more than 195 million Facebook users in India as compared to 191 million in U.S and 90 million in Brazil making it the largest Facebook user country in the world. Facebook penetration rate in India is also expected to increase from almost 15 percent in 2016 to around 23 percent in 2021(Statista.com, 2018).

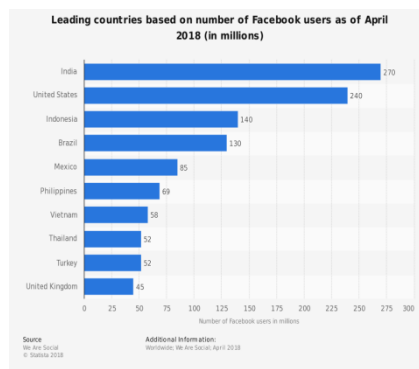


Figure 1.3: Facebook Users in Leading Countries-2018

Source-Statista.com

Facebook have made people crazy with its addiction as every individual gets at least a minute to open it for liking or commenting a picture uploaded on it. People forget the things while chatting on Facebook and many works remain pending as Facebook starts to consume their whole day. As of June 2017, Facebook has over 194.11 million active users more than half of them using Facebook on mobile device. Facebook allows any users who declare themselves to be at least 13 years old to become registered users of the site. Users must register before using the site. Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile pictures. There are 10 million children under 13 with accounts, violating the site’s terms of service.

1.2 Facebook Advertising

For Facebook advertising more than twenty percent advertisers approach for an online advertisement and this is the main reason why social media sites are becoming popular. Businesses are adopting social platform so that they could easily understand the actual need of consumers so that they could act upon it (*Hemsley, 2009*). Because of a great number of users on social media, advertisers too have opted to come into Facebook advertisements which could help them visit the profile of numerous users, create a page on Facebook to be viewed by millions and sharing the products and services offered by them which could reach out to many Facebook users. There are numerous strategies adopted by these advertisers to complete with others on social platform which give them high popularity among children, youth or old aged. Facebook demands two requirements to be fulfilled by the advertisers to spread it to millions of users across the country. Firstly, advertisements must be followed according to the links on Facebook pages. Secondly, the response of users must be calculated by advertisers in order to modify, create or edit the recent or upcoming advertisement on facebook. Facebook is of course active in promoting their ad service on the site

To create advertisement on Facebook, advertisers must visit the site to get through an application which has to be filled. While it is also possible to create a facebook page with One's own facebook profile or ID. Facebook is popular among advertisers for advertisements because of its wide content and generosity towards acceptability. People can anytime, anywhere select any kind or form of advertisement with different pattern and styles which goes together with the interest and style of consumers as well. There is an ease to target audiences on behalf of Facebook as it attract consumers easily on Facebook rather than any other social media sites. After creating the advertisements, advertisers can easily put it on Facebook and it will be visible to every user in their newsfeed which will not disturb them while surfing. After such posts, the views can share it with other fellow mates or friends so that they can also be aware of the products and services provided by the advertisers. The sharing of advertisements through stories could earn advertisers huge amount of money and these statistics can be tracked by the advertisers at any time and any place. Such acts by Facebook help new starters to gear up and work harder.

The advertisement views can be easily calculating by noting the number of times any person clicks on the particular ad which directs them to the advertisement page. Knowingly, it is important for the viewers to land up in the advertisement page as after that only a view could be counted. Also, a special function on Facebook is also available regarding the amount of money any particular advertisers wants to spend each day by which Facebook tries to calculate accordingly. (*Neilson, 2010*)

Infographic shows statistics of Facebook as below:

- Taking an average facebook profile user, there are around 130 friends in total with 80 to 85 likes on various pages.
- Users like to recommend or share such pages (56% users)

- The sharing of pictures or posts or videos by any users on an average is 3.5 billion contents weekly. (Richmond, 2007)

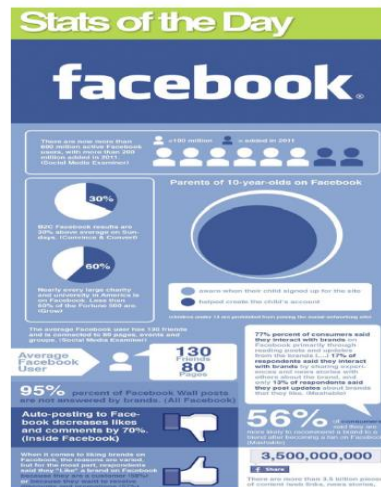


Figure 1.4: Facebook Stastics Source- *statista.com*

1.3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review will provide ways to explain the way through which practitioners invest in social media and the reason of their success through this study. The following papers were reviewed for the study:

- “Church S. Akpan et al. “Influence of Facebook Advertisement on the Buying Behaviour of Students of a Nigerian University” (2015), *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol 5 No 7”: Results of the analysis indicated that a majority of the respondents access advertisements on Facebook which conclude that respondents were targeted. From the results of the study it was clear that the difference of percentage between the buyers and dont’s were not very distanced. Thus, Facebook advertisers must consider more plans and policies to make their ads effective and attractive at the same time. The study was not able to find the effectiveness of Facebook and the sample as well the environment of the current study was limited.
- “James Barnes et. al. (2013)” “Social Advertising Using Facebook Some Experimental Results Using Duck Dynasty Ads to Promote Rural Tourism in Mississippi Department of Agricultural Economics Mississippi State University”: From the study, it was found that there was comparatively less likes on desktop campaign in compared with mobile campaign. The study concluded that mobile devices at the same cost gives more likes to the page and has more users. The study was not able to answer various questions related to social media and its types. Only one measure of organic engagement was tested.
- “Arkvik Quiroga Isabel & Bairakimova Kamila” (2010) “Marketing and Facebook UPPSALA UNIVERSITY Department of Business Studies Master Thesis:

From the findings of the study it was revealed that word of mouth and promotional mix are the strategies used by these companies on Facebook to advertise their products.

Also, it could be noticed that these small fashion hubs used paid advertisements on Facebook to attract users.

The one and only limitation of the study is the researchers' way of conducting the research. The sample collected from the observation was based on their own evaluation thus leading to a biased study.

d) **“Fazal ur Rehman et. al (2014). “How Facebook Advertising Affects Buying Behavior of Young Consumers The Moderating Role of Gender *Academic Research International*” Vol. 5(4)”**: This study examined the effects of Facebook advertisement and Facebook environment on buying behavior of young consumers with gender for moderation. Results indicate that Facebook advertisement has positive, while Facebook environment has negative effect on buying behaviour of young consumers. The results of the study have important implication for marketing research. The study was not based on each individual as its more focus was on women.

e) **“Bohdan Pikas & Gabi Sorrentino. (2014). “The Effectiveness of Online Advertising: Consumer’s Perceptions of Ads on Facebook Twitter and YouTube *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*”, Vol. 16(4)”**: The results of the study disclosed that over two third of the respondents were not interested on the advertisements shown Facebook. If noticed properly, the study revealed that majority of people gets irritated by such ads. The study recommends that choice of viewing ads on Facebook must be adopted to get some impact or else it is worthless. The study was totally based on the choice of respondents and their interest on ads.

The results of the study were only concentrated on the choice and not on the behavior of users. The study needs further research as many points were not highlighted.

1.4: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The following objectives were designed to carry out the study:

- i. To understand level of awareness of Facebook advertising among youth and its correlation with the time spent on Facebook.
- ii. To know if the personal characteristics of gender, age, education, profession have any influence on the content consumption behaviour of youth towards User generated (Non sponsored) content and Non-user generated (Sponsored) content.

Keeping the above objectives in mind the hypothesis designed was as follows:

- ❖ Facebook users are able to differentiate between User generated content and non user generated content (Sponsored content) at aggregate level and at different demographic level.

- ❖ There is a considerable correlation between time spent on Facebook and awareness of NUGC.
- ❖ Majority of Youth irrespective of age, gender and educational qualification are aware that Facebook has given them more control over NUGC to enhance their privacy and Facebook experience.

1.5: Research Methodology

In the present study a detailed structured schedule was used. Schedule is used to explain the difficult terms and questions to the audience so that they can understand them and give correct information.

Direct face to face personal contact method was most preferred for this study because it will help in generating more qualitative data. Prior appointments of the audience were taken by the researcher irrespective of their status i.e. whether school going student, college going student or working professionals to conduct the face to face interview.

1.5. a : Data source

The data sources comprise of two types: primary and secondary. The primary data are original in character and collected for the first time whereas the secondary data are collected by someone else and have been passed through statistical processes (Kothari.C.R, 2010). In the present study both the data were collected through primary and secondary sources to accomplish the research objectives.

1.5. b:Primary data

For the present study, the primary data source is youth (as explained in section sampling unit 3.6) and also who are Facebook users. Major conclusions are drawn by using the primary data only. To ensure that this source is properly utilized care has been exercised at every stage of collection and use of data. For example- At the schedule construction stage it was ensured that the questions are meaningful and free of bias. Also before administering the schedule to the primary data source, testing of schedule was done to eliminate last minute anomalies.

1.5. c:Secondary data

The secondary published data can be from- government bodies, foreign or international bodies and subsidiary organization, technical trade journals, books magazine and newspapers, reports and publications from various associations connected with business and industries, research by scholars, public records and statistics etc (Kothari.C.R, 2010).

A joint report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst & Young on Media and Entertainment industry “Re-imagining India’s M&E Sector 2018” was referred for the details on market share and revenue generated through digital media and different content on digital platform as well as Facebook.

KPMG along with FICCI had released a joint report on “Media for the Masses, The Promise unfolds 2017” based on recent developments in media and entertainment sectors.

Facebook related data - Types of advertisement on Facebook and Facebook benchmark across different industries was derived from sales-force (<https://www.salesforce.com/form/marketingcloud/sc/advertising-benchmark-report.jsp> accessed on 16th January 2018).

The data related to the number of Facebook active users worldwide and in India was retrieved from Statistica.com (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/> accessed on June28 2018). The revenue generated through Facebook advertisement worldwide and across India was taken from Statistica.com(<https://www.statista.com/statistics/277229/facebooks-annual-revenue-and-net-income/> June 28 2018) .Facebook advertising benchmark report was also studied from nanigans.com (<http://www.nanigans.com/resource/fb/usu/q2-2018-global-facebook-advertising-benchmark-report> on 16 January 2018) .

For the history and different types of Facebook advertising authorstream.com was browsed (http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/arpit_daniel-2114592-history-facebook-advertising/ accessed on January 20 2018)

Research journals from sage publication, research gate (as given in Literature review) on different topics of research were also referred. A case study on Facebook by Professor Mikolaj Jan Piskorski and Thomas R. Eisenmann and Aaron Smith from Havard Business School has given detailed insights about Facebook.

1.5.c: Sampling Unit

The sample unit of the present study includes youth between the ages of 16-29 years from Jaipur city. According to the National youth policy (2014), Youth are defined as those people between the age group 15-29 years. The sampling unit was selected from 16 years, as individuals below the age of 16 are officially not eligible to open an account on Facebook.

Justification for taking Youth as the sampling unit is that out of 270 million Facebook users in the first quarter of 2018 across India, 210 million Facebook users are youth*.

1.5.d: Universe

For the sampling unit as described above, the universe is 1245000 youth who are active Facebook users from Jaipur city.

The total active Facebook users across Jaipur city are 1,660,000** out of which 75 percent are youth*** and thus the outcome was 1245000.

1.5. e. Sample size

Ideal sample size is calculated by applying the following formula in descriptive and causal or experimental research designs:

$$S.E. = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Where, Standard Error and Standard Deviation are known in advance, so by solving the equation the value for n is derived.

Since the research design for the present study is exploratory, there is no need to apply the above formula. Hence the sample size is determined by taking into consideration time and other resource constraints.

The sample size is 150, which can entail the application of 'p', 'z' test, Anova test and other sophisticated data analysis techniques to prove or disprove the hypotheses. Although 182 respondents were interviewed for the present study, 150 could effectively answer the questions.

1.5. f.Sampling Method:

Multi- stage sampling technique was employed for selecting the sampling units. In the first stage, out of 91 wards of Jaipur city, 20 wards were selected through simple random sampling. From each ward two private schools, a college and one of the popular food joint was selected through stratified random sampling. Notices were displayed on the school and college notice boards and the interested respondents were contacted through the teacher. Similarly notice was displayed at the food joint and the owners were requested to fill the name and address of the respondents who were interested to be a part of the interview.

In this way from each ward nine people were selected for the interview. In total 182 people were selected. However, the respondent who gave contradictory answers was eliminated and the number of respondents was reduced 150.

1.6. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Data analysis techniques depend on the type of data collected for the research. In the present study, two types of data were collected – Qualitative data and Quantitative data.

In the qualitative data for the present study, absence or presence of an attribute was calculated in terms of its proportion to total phenomenon i.e. (n). Thereafter, test of significance for attributes was applied to have estimate for the universe.

1.6.a Data Analysis and Interpretation

OBJECTIVE 1:

- ❖ **To understand level of awareness of Facebook advertising among youth and its correlation with the time spent on Facebook.**

1.6.i:HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : Facebook users are able to differentiate between User generated content and non user generated content (Sponsored content) at aggregate level and at different demographic level.

1.6.i.a: DIFFRENTIATION BETWEEN UGC and NUGC BY RESPONDENTS

| Respondents Opinion | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Extremely often | 85 | 56.66% |
| Very often | 9 | 6% |
| Moderately often | 13 | 8.67% |
| Slightly often | 14 | 9.34% |
| Not at all | 29 | 19.33% |
| Total(n) | 150 | |

| Facebook Users | n | P-value $\frac{O.F - E.F}{S.E}$ | Theoretical Value $t_{0.05}$ | Hypothesis |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| All Youth Population | 150 | -9.7 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| All male youth population | 89 | -6.74 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| All female youth population | 61 | -3.90 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| Youth Population (16-20 years) | 45 | -5.96 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| Youth Population (21-25 years) | 73 | - 4.6 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| Youth Population (26-29 years) | 32 | - 3.48 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| School going youth population | 51 | - 12.68 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| College going youth population | 66 | - 10.37 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |
| Working youth population | 33 | - 6.82 | -1.654 | Null Hypothesis Rejected |

DIFFRENTIATION BETWEEN UGC and NUGC BY RESPONDENTS

(AT DIFFERENT LEVELS)

Interpretation:

The Facebook users are unable to differentiate between Non User generated content and User generate content at aggregate level and at different demographic level.

1.6.ii:HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is a considerable correlation between time spent on Facebook and awareness of NUGC.

1.6.ii.a: Time spent on Facebook and awareness of NUGC

| Hours Spent on Facebook Per Day | Number of respondents | Number of respondents aware of NUGC | % of People aware of NUGC(Y) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 0-1 hours | 23 | 14 | 60.86 |
| 1-2 hours | 38 | 33 | 86.84 |
| 2-3 hours | 53 | 24 | 45.28 |
| 3-4 hours | 21 | 12 | 57.14 |
| 4-5 hours | 15 | 11 | 73.33 |
| Total | 150 | 94 | |

Correlation between Time spent on Facebook and awareness of NUGC

| N | $r = \frac{N \sum d_x d_y - \sum d_x \sum d_y}{\sqrt{N \sum d_x^2 - (\sum d_x)^2} \sqrt{N \sum d_y^2 - (\sum d_y)^2}}$ | S.E r = $\frac{1-r^2}{\sqrt{n}}$ | Value | Theoretical Value t _{0.05} | Hypothesis |
|------------|--|----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 150 | -0.047 | 0.102 | 8.3 | -1.645 | Null Hypothesis is rejected |

Interpretation:

Since the r -value is more than the theoretical value i.e.-1.645 at 5% significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected which means there is no positive correlation between time spent on Facebook and awareness of Non user generated content(NUGC).

NOTE: Since majority of the Youth were unable to differentiate between User Generated Content (UGC) and Non-User Generated Content (NUGC), the researcher had to make them aware about different Facebook options before carrying the survey further. In other words,

“aided awareness” about Facebook options were deliberately created to go forward in the research. Hence onwards, all the analysis is based on aided awareness.

1.6.iii.

H₀: Majority of Youth irrespective of age, gender and educational qualification are aware that Facebook has given them more control over NUGC to enhance their privacy and Facebook experience.

$$H_0: P = 0.75$$

1.6.iii.a Awareness that Facebook has given more control over NUGC

(At aggregate level)

| Respondents Opinion | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 113 | 75.33% |
| No | 37 | 24.66% |
| Total | n =150 | |

1.6.iii.b Awareness that Facebook has given more control over NUGC

(on the basis of gender, age and educational qualification)

| Facebook Users | n | P-value $\frac{O.F - E.F}{S.E}$ | Theoretical Value $t_{0.05}$ | Hypothesis |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| All Youth population | 150 | 0.094 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| All male youth population | 89 | 3.18 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| All female youth population | 61 | 3.51 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| Youth Population (16-20 years) | 45 | - 0.603 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| Youth Population (21-25 years) | 73 | 1.28 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| Youth Population (26-29years) | 32 | 0.409 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| School going youth population | 51 | 1.37 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| College going youth population | 66 | -0.15 | -1.654 | Null accepted |
| Working youth population | 33 | 0.504 | -1.654 | Null accepted |

Interpretation:

From the table it is clear that the calculated value of P at different levels is more than the theoretical value, the null hypothesis is accepted which means majority of Youth

irrespective of age, gender and educational qualification are aware that Facebook has given them more control over NUGC to enhance their privacy and Facebook experience.

1.7: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

- a) It is generally assumed that all the Facebook users are able to differentiate between the User generated content (ugc) and non-user generated contents (Sponsored content) on a Facebook Page .However, in my study the assumption was proved to be incorrect. According to my study, quite a substantial number of the respondents were unable to differentiate between the user generated content and non user generated contents (Sponsored content) at aggregate level. The same results were found when the respondents were studied under gender category, different age groups and according to their status.

The data suggest that only 62 percent of the aggregate respondents are able to differentiate between the user generated content and non user generated contents (Sponsored content).The data further shows that 59 percent of the male respondents and 66 percent of the female respondents could easily differentiate between the two. This shows that females are having upper hand as compared to males. The data when analyzed under age category shows that 59 percent of the respondents under the age group 21-25 years identified the user generated and non user generated content followed by 67 percent of the respondents under 16-20 years age group and then 72 per cent of the respondents under the age 26-30 years. This shows that the older generation has an edge over the younger generation. Similarly the data of respondents under various status reveals that the percentage of differentiation level of working respondents (51 percent) is higher followed by 49 percent of college going students and 48 percent of school going students. This shows that the working respondents is having more aware of the user generated content and non user generated content (Sponsored content) as compared to the college going and school going students.

b)The amount of time spent on Facebook helps the audience to come across various non user generated content and recall the contents that they might have seen/viewed earlier. It is often assumed that the audience develops more understanding and awareness about the product/ services advertisements if they spend more time on Facebook. But the assumption proved to be incorrect as there was no correlation between the time spent on Facebook and awareness of Non user generated content (NUGC).

- c) Advertisements are more effective when they hit the right target. Facebook has given various options in settings so that the user can have control over the ads and make this advertisement more targeted. It is believed that the Facebook users are aware about these options of Facebook settings and use them to have control over the advertisements. In the study also the supposition was found to be accurate at aggregate level. The same results were derived when the tests were applied at gender, age level and status.

The data show that 75 percent or more of the respondents were aware about the ads control functions of Facebook whereas below 25 percent respondents were unaware about

it at aggregate level. The same results were derived when the respondents were divided on the basis of genders. The awareness level of female respondents (80 percent) is higher as compared to the male respondents (75 percent). 80 percent of the respondents in the age group 21-25 years are having leverage as compared to 78 percent of the respondents in age group 26-30 years followed by 71 percent respondents of age group 16-20 years in having the awareness about the ads control function of Facebook. This shows that the youth in their early twenties are having better awareness level as compared to other two groups. In the same way the data of respondents under various status explains that there is a significant minor difference in the awareness level of college going respondents (75 percent) and working respondents (78 percent). However, only 70 percent of the schools going students were about the ads control function of Facebook.

The study was carried out using conventional methods of data collection. However, analytical tools like click through rates, web analytics could not be used owing to technical reasons. This study only represents the advertiser side of the issue. Further investigations into consumer attitudes toward social media usage for advertising and communications could compliment this study.

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- Statistica.com (210 million Facebook users who fall under the age 13-34 constitute 75 percent of the total Facebook users in India) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/717615/india-number-of-facebook-users-by-age-and-gender/>