CHAPTER V
RESULT AND DISCUSSION
5.1. The digital context of research

“India is more a continent than a country”. With 3,287,590 square km, India is the 7th largest country in the world in terms of territory size, and with 1,210,193,444 (2011 census) inhabitants, India is the 2nd largest country in the world in terms of population size. With GDP of 7.996 trillion dollars (April 2015 estimate) India is the 3rd largest economy in the world; almost all development indexes show that India is among the fastest developing countries in the world.

With billions of dollars of annual revenue, IT and ICT industries are sustainable sources of income and important sections of Indian economy. Large numbers of engineers, experts and technicians and huge investments on IT and ICT from all around the world have made India a global giant in this industry.

With a huge number of TV channels, publications, cinema screens, radio stations, and newspapers, India is a giant in Media industry as well. India is the first country in terms of the number of movies; Bollywood is one of the well-known cultural symbols of India. In terms of new media, particularly the Internet, India is one of the most global digital hubs.

India has 195,248,950 Internet users (Internet World Stats, December, 2013 estimation) Internet users with the Internet penetration rate of 15.8% (June 2014). According to this estimation, after China and the United States, India is the 3rd largest country in the world in terms of number of Internet users. The ‘year to year’ digital population growth of India is among the highest in the world; Internet World States considers India the 2nd country in the world (after Brazil) with highest ‘year to year’ digital population growth.

According to projections, it is estimated that by the end of 2015, there will be more than 300 million Internet users in India; it will make India the second largest country in the world – after China – in terms of the size of online population, although the Internet penetration rate in India will be still low with global standards. There is a great ‘digital gap’ between villagers and inhabitants of cities in India. More than 58% of
Indian Internet users live only on 10 cities. While 742,500,000 Indians live in villages – more than 72% of the whole population – and among them only 12,000,000 are Internet users.

India has a young population – as more than half of the population is below 25 years old. Such demographic property is clearly observable on digital population of India. More that 75% of Indian Internet users are under the age of 30. In terms of gender split, India has ‘male oriented’ digital population. 61% of Indian Internet users are male and only 39% of Indian Internet user are female.

In terms of infrastructures of ICTs, India is mainly relied on mobile phones; it can explain why some call India “the mobile nation” (Doron, 2013). India has more than 900,000,000 mobile users and mobile penetration rate is 79% in India. The number of mobile users has rocketed during the last ten years and the mobile user population growth is incomparable with other ICT sections. Mobile phone infrastructures are strategically important in digital future of India as these infrastructures are going to be used to increase Internet penetration rate in India as well.

Since the advent of mobile Internet – including 2G, 3G, and recently 4G connections – many of Indians who were not Internet users have entered to online population of India and many of them who were already Internet users have shifted to the new digital ecosystem of mobile phones as the main digital ecosystem. The highest mobile penetration rate is again among young Indians. New Internet development projects such as the project of Android 1.0 which aims to provide cheap smart phones for low income people are majorly based on mobile phones.

Broadband connections also are important Internet infrastructures in India. The average broadband speed in India is 4 Mbps which is not very encouraging comparing with the global standards. The number of broadband connections in India also is not encouraging enough to make it the main type of Internet connection in India. Table #.# shows some of the important figures of Indian digital properties.
Karnataka state is one of the important IT hubs in India. Bangalore which is the capital of Karnataka state has very important position in IT industry of India and is an important destination for many IT experts not only in India, but from all around the world. The major global IT companies such as Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, etc. have their headquarters in Bangalore along with many Indian IT and ICT companies which compete in global IT and ICT market.

Accordingly, Karnataka is among those Indian states which enjoy better digital infrastructures. Besides Bangalore, some other cities in Karnataka are on the way to become new IT hubs; Mysore is among those cities and according to projections, is becoming the second IT hub in Karnataka after Bangalore.

Several important IT companies such as Infosys and Vipro have their headquarters in Mysore. Mysore also has a ‘good’ Internet infrastructure; although comparing with Bangalore, Mysore still has poorer Internet infrastructures. Several private Internet provider companies such as Airtell, Aircell, TATA, Vodafone, Reliance and also BSNL, which is a government aide ICT company, offer different types of Internet connections. In table #.# a comparison of the Internet services provided by each of these companies and their prices are available.

The Internet infrastructures in Muslim areas of Mysore are different from an area to the other area. It is mostly depended into the economic conditions of Muslims in each area. In those areas where Muslims have better economic backgrounds, broadband connections along with other types of Internet such as mobile Internet connections are available, while in those Muslim areas where more poor Muslims live, usually the only choice is mobile Internet and Muslims do not have chance to get broadband connection. Map #.# shows the distributions of these Muslim areas according to their access to different types of Internet connections.

5.1.1. Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore

Internet penetration rate is an important property of any digital population. Evaluating the Internet penetration rate is one of the first and important steps in studying
the Internet among a particular population. The Internet penetration rate shows what percentage of the population use the Internet. Based on the Internet penetration rate, researchers can estimate how important the Internet can be in the daily life of the population.

Unfortunately, there was no any official or scientifically approved data on the Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore. As mentioned, *Internet World State* estimates that the Internet penetration rate for India is 15.8% (June 2014), but considering the fact that the geographical distribution of the Internet users in India is highly uneven – they are mainly concentrated on the main cities of India – it is hard to confidently generalize such Internet penetration rate to Muslim populations in Mysore as well.

Therefore, it should be confessed that, as a qualitative research, this study cannot provide a reliable quantitative status about the Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore. The status which is discussed here is based on observations of the researcher and interviews conducted during the fieldwork.

To discuss about the Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore, it can be analogically said that there are archipelagos of the Internet users in the Muslim community of Mysore. Generally speaking, the level of Internet usage among Muslims of Mysore is not still very encouraging as a considerable percentage of the community does not still use the Internet.

Although during the three years of the fieldwork of this study, a constant improvement was witnessed in terms of the number of Muslim Internet users and the Internet penetration among Muslims of Mysore; gradually more members of the community use the Internet on daily basis and the Internet is turning to be a ‘take for granted’ necessary technology rather that a mysterious luxury phenomenon.

Proliferation of mobile Internet and smart phones are important reasons behind such improvements on the Internet penetration rate and growth of the number of the Internet users. Many of the new Muslim Internet users initiated their digital life only with the mobile phones and do not have any experience of PC mediated online experience. In
other words, popularity of the mobile Internet can be interpreted as an important digital development force among Muslims of Mysore.

5.1. 2. Digital divide among Muslims of Mysore

The logical consequence of the low Internet penetration rate among Muslims of Mysore is a deep digital gap among members of the community. Digital divide refers to the gap between those who have access to the Internet – and use the Internet – and those who are digitally excluded and has no access to the Internet. While a large number of Muslims in Mysore suffer from severe lack of digital inclusion, smaller portion of the Muslims community have regular access to the Internet and online experience is part of their daily experiences.

Besides the digital gap between members of the community, there are some other types of digital inequality among the members of the community. One of the notable types of digital inequality among Muslims of Mysore is between males and females of the community.

Generally speaking, female members of Muslim community in Mysore had less chance of accessing to the Internet. It can be explained by the low level of social engagement among female members which is considerably lower than male members of the community. This study shows that they had less chance to own a smart phone comparing with male members. They also had less digital independence as in many cases, their digital experiences were controlled by the family authorities. Lower level of education among female Muslims also can explain why they had less chance of accessing to the Internet comparing with male members of the community.

But it is important to note that this condition has been changing over the last few years. During the three years of this field study, it was observable that Muslim women had increasingly intention to use the Internet. Smart phones and mobile Internet were among key players in this new dynamism; by the proliferation of mobile Internet, Muslim women found a solution to access the Internet and as more cheaper smart phones released in the market, this dynamism intensified.
During the initial months of the fieldwork in 2011, when the dominant type of Internet connection was broadband connection and PCs and laptops were the main connecting devices, it was observable that Muslim women had less chance of accessing to the Internet. But gradually as cheaper smart phones and mobile Internet proliferated on the market during 2012, 2013 and 2014, more and more Muslim women became Internet users.

There are other sources of digital divide among Muslims of Mysore. For example, there is a considerable digital gap between young generations and those who belong to the older generations of Muslims in Mysore in terms of their access to the Internet. Young Muslims were the dominant group of the Internet users in the community and comparing with their parents, they had more intention and skill to use the Internet effectively and regularly. Young Muslims were well aware about their digital predominance and knew that it is an important source for their independence.

But the level of Internet usage was not equal even among the young members of the community. There were many young Muslims in Mysore who do not use the Internet at all and it illuminates the other sources of digital divide in the community; economic and education backgrounds which are important sources of digital inequality among Muslims of Mysore. There was digital gap between those Muslims who have better economic background and poor members of Muslim community. For many of poor members of the Muslim community affording the costs of accessing to the Internet was real challenge and therefore, they did not have chance to use the Internet.

Another source of digital gap among the members of the Muslim community was their education level. Most of the Muslims who use the Internet were those who had some level of education. The fact that the education level of Muslims in Mysore was not encouraging can explain why many members of the community did not use the Internet. The correlation between the improvements of education level particularly among young Muslims and the level of the Internet usage was clearly observable.
5.2. Barriers of Internet usage among Muslims of Mysore

Despite the fact that the number of Internet users among Muslim of Mysore have increased during the last few years, but still a large number of them have not entered in the global online population. Investigating the causes and barriers of Internet usage among the members of this community will provide insights about the challenges that this community face to increase the Internet penetration rate and digital development. In an overall view, there were five major categories of barriers that impede them of using the Internet: 1) the financial inability to use the Internet, 2) Illiteracy or low literacy, 3) technical inability to use the Internet – digital literacy – 4) unwillingness to use the Internet and 5) negative interpretation about the Internet.

5.2.1. Financial inability to use the Internet

One of the predominant barriers of Internet usage among Muslims of Mysore was the financial inability of many Muslims who could not afford accessing to the Internet. In a simple description, the costs of accessing to the Internet were disproportionately higher than what many poor Muslim families can afford. Affordability of the Internet access was a real challenge. For these members of the community, the Internet is a luxury technology.

In rare cases, if any of these low poor members of the community decided to use the Internet, it would take a considerable share of his income and it was always a challenging decision. However the proliferation of mobile Internet connections and cheap smart phones had ameliorated the condition. Many of poor Muslims, who could not afford the costs of setting up broadband Internet connections, and could not buy laptop or PC, and could not also pay the monthly charges of the Internet, had found a reliable solution. They bought cheap smart phones, got an affordable mobile Internet connection and enjoyed considerable diversity of data charges which allowed them to manage their monthly costs.
5.2.2. Illiteracy or low literacy

Another effective barrier of Internet usage among Muslims of Mysore was illiteracy and/or low literacy. While the emerging technological trends particularly on the Internet provide more audio-visual environment, and facilitate Internet usage for those who are not so comfortable with the text-based online contents, but still text based contents are important part of information traffic on the Internet. Accordingly, for those Muslims how suffered from the lack of literacy, using the Internet was a real challenge.

For some of Muslims who had some level of education, English language was a challenge and a barrier of effective Internet usage. Urdu was the mother tongue and the main communication language for many of Muslims in Mysore. But the level of Urdu-based contents on the Internet was not very much and it closed the boundaries of possible online experience for those Muslims who did not know English at all. Although, they had gradually found solution as they improved a network with others who had the same challenge and were developing Urdu based content on the Internet.

5.2.3. Digital literacy

Digital literacy is the familiarity with using digital technologies – e.g. the Internet –and the lack of such familiarity always was an effective barrier for many Muslims to use the Internet. There were Many Muslims who were uncomfortable with using the Internet and it was another major barrier for many of Muslims in Mysore to use the Internet. This challenge was not necessary limited to uneducated Muslims; there were many Muslims with enough education background who were unfamiliar with how to effectively use the Internet. Such cases were more observable among older Muslims who did not have enough willingness and motivation to learn the necessary skills and use the Internet.

5.2.4. Unwillingness to use the Internet

A number of Muslims, who did not use the Internet, kept saying that they did not want to use the Internet because the Internet did not provide something valuable for them and they did not have willing to use the Internet. Many of them had enough economic background to afford accessing costs of the Internet as well as enough education level to
use the Internet and even enough English proficiency; but they did not have any motivation that encourages them to use the Internet.

In many cases, such unwillingness to use the Internet was correlated with particular interpretation about the Internet. Many of these Muslims defined the Internet as “just another entertainment tool” and did not consider the Internet as a “serious” phenomenon. As it is predictable, most of these Muslims were among old members of the community who usually were highly accustomed with their own means of communication channels and traditional medias such as TV and newspaper and accordingly are not openly ready to change their communication and media usage habits. And in rare cases, some Muslims had negative interpretation about the Internet as destructive technology and therefore they did not use the Internet.

5.2.5. Negative interpretations about the Internet

There were different interpretations about the Internet among Muslims of Mysore. Some of these interpretations were extremely optimistic, and in contrast, some others were very pessimistic. Although most of Muslims who were interviewed in this study were somewhere in between and simultaneously considered positive and negative aspects of the Internet. The negative interpretation of the Internet was another barrier for some Muslims who did not want to use the Internet.

Those Muslims who had such negative interpretations about the Internet were always less likely to recognize positive aspects, values and benefits of Internet and in contrast, they always amplified the negative impacts of the Internet on their culture and society. Some of them did not allow the Internet to be used in their houses. But it is important to note that nowadays, there are comparatively rare cases of such families among Muslims of Mysore. Today, most of those Muslim welcome the Internet as an effective and “good” phenomenon.

5.3. Motivations of Internet usage among Muslims of Mysore

The Internet is a ‘multilateral’ phenomenon with unlimited functionalities. It has different faces and different people encounter with different faces of it. It explains why
different people use the Internet with different motivations. People usually are not motivated to use the Internet only for one reason and an amalgamation of factors motivates them to use the Internet. There were correlation between the factors that motivated Muslims to use the Internet and their online behaviors.

Discussing about their motivations provides a reliable framework to understand their interpretations and evaluations of the Internet as well as their online behaviors and habits which root in their motivations, needs and expectations that bring them to the Internet. It is notable that these motivations changed through time; they might begin using the Internet for curiosity, but soon after initiating Internet usage they found new sets of motivations, such as powerful online ties, that encouraged them to continue their Internet usage.

Although it cannot be claimed that some of these motivations were "stronger" or "more effective" than the others, but some of these motivations were more repeatedly mentioned by Muslims Internet users. In general, there were five major groups of motivations that were more reputedly mentioned on the interviews including 1) advantages of online communication channels, 2) more social empowerment 3) more freedom on online space, 4) desire to be up to date and 5) curiosity.

5.3.1. Advantages of online communication channels

The services and channels of communication on the Internet are really attractive. In this study, a wide range of answers to the question of “why you use the Internet?” referred to the attractiveness and advantages of these online services. In this sense, they interpreted the Internet as a “new” tool to do what they were doing before but in faster, broader, cheaper, more diversified and more effective ways.

5.3.1.1. Wide variety of services and tools on the Internet

Comparing with other communication technologies such as telephones, the Internet provides much more diversified mediums of communication. It was a widely common advantage of the Internet that was mentioned by many participants as an important motivation for them to use the Internet. They mentioned that communication
via the Internet was not limited to text or sound or any other particular medium. As the results, the Internet offered many choices.

On the other hand, the advent of social networks on the Internet has dramatically pushed the boundaries of online social interaction into new and unprecedented realms. Traditionally, people could be engaged only on interpersonal communication; they did not have chance for instance communication in a group of people. But the Internet has dramatically changed the scene. Now, thanks to the Internet, they can easily communicate with a group of friends. Many Muslim participants who were interviewed were very well aware about the fact that comparing with the older channels of communication the Internet has dramatically improved their social interaction experience and it explains why many of they have replaced the Internet as the alternative channel of their communication.

5.3.1.2. The communication speed on the Internet

Communication speed was another inseparable attraction of the Internet which was mentioned by many participants as a motivation for them to use the Internet. The Internet communication was instantaneous and has considerably raised the pace of communication.

Communication speed was important motivation for both groups of Internet users, those participants who were not experienced Internet users – the newcomers on the online space – and the experienced Internet users – who had longer history of online experience. For the experienced participants, the slow pace of older means of communication was unbearable and for the newcomers, fast pace of online communication was highly attractive and a great motivation to continuing their online experience. Very soon, these newcomers found that they also were accustomed with the new pace of communication on the Internet that had changed their online habits.
5.3.1.3. Vast geographical expansion

Using the Internet expands the geographic scope of communication in a global scale. Consequently, the Internet users can communicate with more people who are scattered all around the world. This fact was another notable motivation mentioned by many participants in their interviews.

For example, many of the studied samples had family members and/or friends who lived in other countries (mostly in Arabian countries in Persian Gulf such UAE and Saudi Arabia). The Internet had provided an effective communication medium for them to keep their communication with their relative without any geographical limitation and it was an important motivation for them to use the Internet. Cheaper communication via the Internet also allowed them to easily be in touch with their relatives and friends abroad. For example, Sadique mentioned how Mysore Muslims who had relatives outside India can easily communicate with them thanks to the Internet.

‘We can talk with our relatives who live abroad, we can even see them while speaking… it feels like I meet them personally; I do not miss them as before!... Sometimes because we have time difference, we fix appropriate time in advance!'

The Internet also allowed them to expand their communication circles to considerably vaster geographical expansion and make relations which were unimaginable without the Internet. Many of Muslims, who participated in this study, looked to find friends in other countries. In many cases, they could find friends in other countries – particularly in Pakistan with whom they shared Urdu language and Arab countries. This was also an important motivation for them to use the Internet.

5.3.1.4. Economic benefits of using the Internet

The economic benefit of using the Internet was another important motivation for many of the studied samples to use the Internet. Many of them mentioned that the cheaper communication on the Internet was has encouraged them to choose the Internet as the permanent alternative communication channel instead of the older communication mediums.
At the first glance, communication via the Internet, compared with the other means of communication such as mobile phone was not cheap. But, considering the fact that by paying a monthly charge for the Internet connection, they could have many other facilities, such as entertainment and education besides communication facilities, we can explain why they believed that the Internet was more affordable comparing with other communication technologies.

Many of the participants always used instant Messaging services particularly WhatsApp and Viber, as the alternative communication medium instead of phone calls and SMS text messages. These online services were always being used on smart phones or tables – however they could be used on PCs as well. Cheaper communication meant that they could keep in touch with a larger numbers of friends.

5.3.2. Social empowerment

"Social empowerment" and "social engagement" are intertwined and amplify each other. Using the Internet can effectively improve the level of social engagement and accordingly it increases social empowerment. One of the first impacts of the growing popularity of the Internet in social context of Muslims in Mysore was increment of social interaction, social engagement and as the result, social empowerment of Muslims in Mysore. Although most of Muslims do not talk about this fact from an expert perspective, but they always unconsciously understand this fact and many of them mentioned this factor as an important motivator for them to use the Internet, although with inexpert language.

Many participants mentioned that using the Internet has been a “new opportunity” for them; Muslim women more frequently mentioned this fact. Looking at the level of social engagement among Muslim women in Mysore and comparing that with the level of social engagement among Muslim men can explain why they emphasis on this fact more frequently that Muslim men.

The low level of social engagement among Muslim women is a common condition in many Islamic societies all around the world. This condition has traditionally
existed in the Muslim community of Mysore as well. In one of the few studies conducted about this community, *Satayaarayana* (1993) described the low level of social engagement among Muslim women in Mysore. Although, comparing with 1993, when his study was conducted about 20 years ago, the social engagement of Muslim women in Mysore has improved, but Muslim women in Mysore still face many restrictions and limitations.

Many Muslim families in Mysore had conservative attitudes towards social communication of women. Generally speaking, Muslim women in Mysore were supposed to communicate only with closed circle of family members and relatives and any contact with men outside this closed circle was unacceptable. Usually, the level of social engagement for Muslim women outside this closed circle was very low. It is important to note that it was one of the difficulties during the fieldwork because conducting interviews with Muslim women was difficult comparing with men.

In such social context, the Internet was seen as “an aperture” for Muslim women that could provide more chances for social, interaction, more social engagement and accordingly more social empowerment for Muslim women. This online dynamism was intermingled with the improvements in the education level of Muslim women, and the two amplified each other. *Faizia*, a 28 years old housewife who had graduated from Mysore University with M.Sc. in chemistry explained this new dynamism among women in Muslim community of Mysore:

“Our mothers and grandmothers were hardly aware about things that were happening even in their own city, their lives were limited only to their houses. But the Internet let us to know more about the world, let us compare cultures and let us know better ourselves, our religion and our people.”

5.3.3. Sense of freedom on the Internet

Many of social norms that regulate social actions are comparatively thinner on the Internet. The fact that people can communicate on the Internet with selective or manipulated identity or even anonymously – without identity – can eliminate many limitations and traditional sources of social control such as family control. This fact provides a communication environment with more sense of freedom, more choices and
less boundaries and constraints comparing with the other communication environments. The Internet increased not only the level of social engagement and social empowerment but also increased the sense of freedom among the studied samples and it was another motivation to use the Internet mentioned many participants.

In a traditional community such as Muslims of Mysore, where still many traditional Islamic forces were enacted, the Internet was highly welcomed as a freer social space particularly among young members of the community who intended to have more freedom, independence and authority. Many of the respondents mentioned that comparing with their “real world” relationships they felt freer on the Internet.

An important example was the relationships between boys and girls which were customary unaccepted in traditional Islamic communities such as the one in Mysore. Muslim families in Mysore had usually conservative attitude towards the relationships between young boys and girls. It explains why the average age of marriage is relatively low among them and parents are intended to find a spouse for their children as soon as possible; relationships between young boys and girls, out of the framework of marriage were not usually welcomed. But, many of the younger Muslim boys and girls preferred to have friendly and/or romantic relationships with each other out of the traditional framework of marriage and the Internet provided such opportunity.

They used the Internet as a clandestine – or semi-clandestine – channel for such friendly and/or romantic relationships and it was a great motivation for them to use the Internet. They considered this as a “positive feature” of the Internet; however their parents oppositely were always worried about what their children do on the Internet and the negative impact of their “open relations” on a the Internet. They were well aware that since they had less technical skills, could not control their children on the Internet to prevent these negative impacts. Hassan, who was 52 years old business owner, explained his worry:

“We cannot use Internet as good as our children and they know that; we cannot be sure what they do on the Internet; we cannot control their relations and we cannot be sure whether it is good for them or not”
Parents were well aware about the fact that the Internet has weakened their control over their children and interestingly, younger Muslims also were very well aware about the fact that most of their parents were naïve armature Internet users, and their superior digital skills had increased their autonomy, independence and accordingly their freedom. And young Muslims welcomed that. It was interesting also that the digital skills were working as boundary between generations which could increase the sense of belonging to a generation, particularly among young Muslims. It was quiet common among young Muslim to share their online experiences in face to face interactions – such as on religious gatherings or family parties – while they talked about the features of newly released smart phones or new facilities in an updated application and things like these; in fact, sharing online experiences on offline interactions were a part of the youth culture among Muslims of Mysore.

5.3.4. To be up to date

In a highly interwoven globalized world, a kind of universal lifestyle is accepted and praised all around the world – especially among young people – which has several common elements, such as consumption pattern, entertainment habits, dress codes, food habits and so on. Digital experiences – and above all, online experiences – also constitute an important part of this globally accepted lifestyle. This lifestyle is usually interpreted – and always praised – as “up-to-date” lifestyle.

A great majority of interviewed participants mentioned their great intention to this lifestyle; they wanted to be known as modern and so called “up-to-date” people. They knew that regular use of the Internet is an important and integral part of this lifestyle; it was fashionable and trendy among young Muslims in Mysore.

On the contrary, they tend to wear western clothes like jeans. Such intention to modern lifestyle is observable also on their food habit, on their entertainment habit, on their consumption pattern as well as their dress codes.

Even many of those young Muslims who did not enjoy a good socio-economic background understood the fact that they need to have at least some Internet experience
in order to be accepted as a member of “young” generation. For them using the Internet was a way to improve their social class which allowed them to lessen the gap between them and those who had higher socio-economic background. These poor young Muslims who could not easily afford expenses of accessing to the Internet, tried to find alternative ways to have access to the Internet such as using the Internet on college, or cyber café and/or buying cheap and in many cases second hand smart phones to have access to the Internet.

5.3.5. Curiosity about the Internet

Curiosity is another effective factor that brought many Muslims to the Internet; curiosity to know what the Internet is and what they can do on the Internet. Many of those participants who mentioned that they began using the Internet for some kind of curiosity shared a common characteristic; they felt that the Internet was a mysterious phenomenon; a phenomenon which had to be discovered.

In most of these cases, they began their online experience by some kind of curiosity, but later usually some other motivations encouraged them to continue their online experience. In other words, after they used the Internet for few times, the Internet was demystified and turns from mysterious unknown realm into a mundane technology in the context of their everyday lives.

5.4. Patterns of accessing to the Internet

Different patterns of accessing to the Internet are the results of availability of the Internet – technological infrastructures of the Internet– affordability of the Internet and personal choices made by the Internet users. The ways through which people connect to the Internet affect their online experiences as well.

Using slow Internet connections with considerable data usage limitation, forces some online constrains comparing with the Internet user who connects to the Internet through a fast Internet connection without any data usage limitation. The monthly costs of the accessing to the Internet also affect the regularity of accessing to the Internet. Choosing a type of Internet connection is a decision that can affect the other entire
process of online experience. This fact is applicable about the devices that people utilize
to have access to the Internet as well. Using a smart phone which supports mobile
Internet connection allows the user to enjoy an omnipresent access to the Internet while
an Internet user who has to connect to the Internet only through a PC faces considerable
spatial limitations.

In this research, several aspects of the patterns of accessing to the Internet were
investigated among Muslims of Mysore including the connection types they prefer, the
average monthly payments they pay to have access to the Internet, the devices that they
use to connect to the Internet, the connecting places and the time schedule of their
Internet usage.

5.4.1. Choosing the connection types

The expectations of participants from the Internet and the reasons which had
brought them to the Internet were different; their economic backgrounds and education
level were also different. Accordingly, discussions they made about how to have access
to the Internet were different as well. They used different types of Internet connections
with different speed and different range of data usage limitations and always had very
clear reasons for their decisions, mostly based on their digital needs, their economic
abilities and based on the technological possibilities.

Generally there were three major types of Internet connections in Muslim
including broadband Internet connections, CDMA dongles, and mobile Internet
connections. Table 5.1 shows the popularity of each of these four types of Internet
connections among the Muslim participants.

Analyzing the data gathered by that online survey showed that mobile Internet
connections (including 2G and 3G) was the most favored type of Internet connection
among Muslims of Mysore. Then, broadband connections were the second favored
connection type and lastly, CDMA dongles were the least popular type of Internet
connection type among the studied participants.

The age distribution of the studied samples in this study explains why mobile
Internet connections were very popular among the studied samples. A great majority of
the participants in this study were below 30 years old and the common choice among these young Internet users was usually mobile Internet.

For most of these young participants, their mobile phones were more than simply a gadget. For them, mobile phones were one of the most important attribute of their lifestyle; gradually, a permanent “extension” of their bodies. It is important to mention that there were two generations of mobile Internet connections know as 2G – for second generation – and 3G – for third generation – each with different speed and accordingly different monthly charges. As can be predicted, 3G were faster, naturally more expensive and more popular connections.

Broadband connections were only available at a certain Muslim areas; it was because ISPs did not offer broadband connections in poor Muslim areas. This fact also decreased the possibility of using broadband connections for some of the participants and accordingly, they had to choose between mobile Internet and DCAM dongles; and in most of the cases, their choice was mobile Internet.
TABLE 5.1: Popularity of different types of Internet connection among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Connection types</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 3G</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile 2G</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCAM</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>517</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* This table is made based on online survey sent to the participants; in the online survey, participants were asked about their patterns of access to the Internet. All of the participants replied to the survey. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.

![Figure 10: Popularity of different types of Internet connection among the studied samples](image-url)
5.4.2. Monthly charges of accessing to the Internet

Although using mobile Internet connections offered very encouraging Internet speed, but they had relatively expensive tariffs with considerable low data usage limitation. For example, a user can use about 1GB of Internet traffic with encouraging speed of 3 Mbps for about Rs.250/-. However, broadband connections provided considerably better more data traffic limitation with considerably less monthly charges.

Generally speaking, it was difficult to realize the real payments of the Internet among the studied samples because most of them were economically provident Internet users who always were successful to find a solution in order to eliminate their costs of accessing to the Internet. The most common solution was using a portfolio of Internet connections.

For most of the young participants in this study, mobile Internet connections were the first and the most important Internet connection which provided omnipresent access to the Internet – and nonstop connection – digital autonomy and independence. But as mentioned above, since mobile Internet tariffs were considerably expensive, they could confidently do whatever they wanted; for example watching a lengthy video could terminate their limited data and they always avoided that. Instead, they were always looking for available free Wi-Fi connections as a complementary Internet connection to compensate their usage limitations through mobile Internet. These free WiFi connections could be found on coffee shops, restaurants, their family houses, in some cases in their colleges or in their offices. In some cases, having free WiFi connection was an important attribute of a restaurant and many of them chose their rendezvous place according to the availability of free WiFi connections in that place.

Online survey sent to the participants in which they were asked about the range of monthly costs they paid to have access to the Internet. In that online survey 7 ranges of monthly charges were available and participants could chose one out of the 7 choices. These ranges were selected based on the monthly tariffs of Internet available in Mysore. Table 5.2 portrays answers of the participant. According to the survey, the average monthly costs of accessing to the Internet were between Rs.300 to Rs.1000 for month. Few of samples said that they pay more or less than this average.
**TABLE 5.2: The monthly charges of Internet access paid by the participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranges of monthly charges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Rs.100</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 100-300</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 300-500</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 500-700</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 700-1000</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 1000-1500</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 1500</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>517</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* This table is made based on online survey sent to the participants; in the online survey, participants were asked about their patterns of access to the Internet. All of the participants replied to the survey. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.

**Figure 11: The monthly charges of Internet access paid by the participants**
5.4.3. Connecting devices

The devices that participants used to have access to the Internet were continuously improving to provide faster and easier access to the Internet. Such technological improvements had always social meanings as well. Working with the latest released devices was a source of social status, especially among the young participants. Generally, there were four types of devices which were being used by participants to provide access to the Internet including desktop PCs, laptop PCs, tablet PCs and mobile phones.

It was not surprising that mobile phones were the most popular Internet accessing device among the Muslims participants. A great majority of the studied samples mentioned mobile phones as the main device they use to have access to the Internet. Most of these samples had experienced the PC dominant online lifestyle and but after the advent of smart phones and mobile Internet, many of them had shifted to smart phone ecosystem; although again most of them still used PC for some purposes and as complementary device.

There was gender split in terms of using mobile phones; male participants had more chance to have access to mobile Internet comparing with female participants. Interpreting such gap can be possible if we consider the fact that women in Muslim community of Mysore had less digital independence comparing with men in the community. Family authorities had more control over the Internet usage of women comparatively and in some cases, using smart phones and mobile Internet were not easily accepted for female members of families.

Many of the participants always carried their mobile phones with them everywhere, every time. They woke up with their mobile phones and slept with it. Mobile phones were private and personal ‘digital ecosystem’. Usually, computers were being shared by several users. But mobile phones were not shared; they were like toothbrush, and as nobody can use someone else’s toothbrush, nobody can use someone else’s mobile phone.
After mobile phones, desktop PCs followed by Laptop PCs were the next popular connecting devices among Muslims of Mysore. Finally, tablet PCs were the least popular device among the studied sample. Table 5.3 shows the popularity of each group of devices according to the online survey sent to the participants.

Desktop and laptop PCs were traditionally the dominant digital ecosystem and prior to the advent and proliferation of smart phones and mobile Internet connections web-based ecosystems on PC were highly popular online ecosystems. But after the proliferation of mobile Internet, PC ecosystems were not popular as before. PCs were used for some purposes, although not as much as before. In many cases participants combined the two devices in order to facilitate or accelerate their online experience. Using multiple devices provided a diverse digital ecosystem for the participants.

Another interesting trend among the studied samples was their aptitude to buy newest devices. Such aptitude was particularly observable among those participants who used mobile phone as the main connection device. Most of them had great desire to buy better and better and newer and newer mobile phones. In many cases even when they could not afford the costs of the newer device they change their second hand device with someone else; they used a mobile phone for a period of time, then after selling their second hand mobile phone, they changed it with a better and newer second hand phone. Using online exchange platforms were one of the most prominent solutions to sell and buy second hand mobile phones. Among all the online exchange platforms, *Ebay* and *Quicker* were the most popular.
### TABLE 5.3: Popularity of different connecting devices among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecting devices</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phones</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop PC</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop PC</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablet PC</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **517** | **908** |

*Source:* This table is made based on online survey sent to the participants; in the online survey, participants were asked about their patterns of access to the Internet. All of the participants replied to the survey. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.

![Pie Chart](image)

**Figure 12: Popularity of different connecting devices among the studied samples**
5.4.4. Connecting places

Places where participants had access to the Internet were important because in many cases these places posed spatial limitations that affected their online experiences. Choosing the place of Internet access could have technological, economic and/or socio-cultural reasons and in many cases, a combination of all the three factors worked together to determine “where” the participants used the Internet.

The devices and the connection types which they used to connect to the Internet were also imposed considerable spatial forces and were highly intermingled with the place where the participants used to have access to the Internet. For example, those participants who used broadband connections – and usually used PCs as the main connecting devices – were forced to use the Internet only certain place where the broadband connection was set up. But in contrast, those participants who accessed to the Internet through mobile Internet connection could use the Internet in any place and had very less spatial limitation.

Choosing the place of accessing to the Internet was not only a technological matter; it could be economic as well. For example, those participants who were not able to afford the costs of owning a personal device and monthly charges of Internet connection had to go to the public places where the Internet connections were offered such as colleges or cyber cafes. They did not have chance to chose the place of accessing to the Internet and had to use the Internet only in certain and limited places.

Socio-cultural factors also were important to determine where the participants connected to the Internet. For example, some Muslim families did not allow their children – particularly their daughters – to use the Internet outside of their households. However, these were comparatively rare cases among the studied samples. In these cases, usually the main connection type was broadband connection, and desktop PCs were the main connecting device which was set up at home and was shared by the members of the family and usually the family forces – usually parents particularly father – of the household had kinds of direct or indirect surveillance.
The participants were asked about the main place where they connected to the Internet in the framework of an online survey. In that survey they could choose among several possibilities such as home, office, college, cyber café, and also there were an option for them to chose if they did not have any particular place where they connected to the Internet. Table 5.4 represents the answers of participants to that online survey and shows the spatial orientation in accessing to the Internet among the studied samples of this study.

Most of the participated said that their Internet usage was not constrained on a certain place. It was obviously because of the fact that mobile Internet was the dominant Internet connections and mobile Internets provide omnipresent access to the Internet. Except those participants, for the rest of the participant who did not use mobile phones as the dominant device, homes were the next main accessing place followed by offices and then universities/colleges.

It is important to note that cyber cafés were gradually extinct. It was again because of the proliferation of mobile Internet and smart phones which provided cheaper Internet facilities and in this case, regularly going to cyber café was not economically logical. Most of the cyber cafés in Muslim areas which were once so busy places now have changed mostly on online game zones.
TABLE 5.4: Popularity of different connecting places among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Places</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No spatial limit</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University/College</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber café</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>517</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: This table is made based on online survey sent to the participants; in the online survey, participants were asked about their patterns of access to the Internet. All of the participants replied to the survey. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.

Figure 13: Popularity of different connecting places among the studied samples
5.4.5. Regularity of the Internet usage

The questions of ‘how’ and ‘where’ participants had access to the Internet were supplemented by the question of ‘how often’ they used the Internet. It was observable that great majority of the studied samples used the Internet on daily basis. The Internet was an inseparable part of their everyday life. Besides the majority of participants who used the Internet on daily basis, there were few participants who spent smaller share of their time on the Internet; some connected weekly once or twice and some other used the Internet several times in a month.

Although most of them used the Internet on daily basis, but the duration of their daily Internet usages were different. Some spent more share of their days online and some others spent only few minutes a day. In an online survey the participants were asked about the regularity of their access to the Internet and the hours each spent on the Internet. Table 5.5 represents the average hours of Internet usage in each time of Internet usage by the studied samples. Most of the studied samples spent 3 to 5 hours on each time they get connected; no matter it was daily of weekly intervals. Although a very great majority of them got connected on daily basis.
TABLE 5.5: Hours of Internet usage in each Internet access intervals by studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Internet usage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 hours</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 hours</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 hours</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10 hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: This table is made based on online survey sent to the participants; in the online survey, participants were asked about their patterns of access to the Internet. All of the participants replied to the survey. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.

Figure 14: Hours of Internet usage in each Internet access intervals by studied samples
5.5. Major themes of online activities among studied samples

The Internet has increasingly become a vital part of daily life for most of the Muslim samples who participated in this study. As time passed, their online communication circles expanded, their potential connections were increased and the patterns of their online activities became more complicated.

Different participants used the Internet in many different ways. Such differences were the representations of the different ways they conceptualized the Internet, different motivations that had encouraged them to use the Internet, their different expectations and needs from the Internet, their different psychological properties, their different cultural orientations and even the divers patterns of their access to the Internet.

But despite all the differences, in an overall perspective some major themes of online activities were recognizable among almost all of the Muslim participants. These major themes of online activities includes “online communication”, “online entertainment”, “online learning and education”, and “online shopping”. Almost all online activities of the studied sample could be classified at least in one of these major themes.

These major themes of online activities provided a reliable ‘conceptual frameworks’ for the researcher to conceptually categorize the collected data during the fieldwork and shaped a skeleton to study online habits as well as online behavior of the studied samples. Accordingly, the rest of this report is framed based on these major themes of online activities and a combination of these major themes portrays their online life styles.

Table 5.6 shows the popularity of each these themes of online activities. To produce this table, an online survey sent to the participants in which they were asked to choose one out of the major themes as the “main” theme of online activity.
**TABLE 5.6: Popularity of each of theme of online activities among the studied samples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes of online activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online communication</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online entertainment</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online learning</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online shopping</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>998</strong></td>
<td><strong>908</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: This table is made based on an online survey sent to the participants in which they were asked to choose one out of the major themes as the “main” theme of online activity. A copy of that online survey is available on the Appendix.*

![Figure 15: Popularity of each of theme of online activities among the studied samples](image)
5.6. Online communication

Communicating was in the center of all online activities of the participants. The advent of the Internet had dramatically altered the patterns of their social interactions. Considerable number of Facebook users among the studied samples and the popularity of instant messaging services such as WhatsApp among them are only some examples that show how the Internet has revolutionized the social communication.

Online communication is a CMC (computer mediated communication) for which an Internet user needs an Internet connection and a series of online services to communicate with another user. There is a considerable diversity of online services and platforms which provide communication environment for Internet. Even those online platforms which offer services that do not directly provide communication facilities (such as online shopping platforms) always try to provide communication ecosystems as complementary features.

Online communication can be ‘synchronous’ or ‘asynchronous’. Synchronous online communications are those in which people communicate in real time, and therefore all the communication parties should be connected to the Internet – be online – in the time of communication. Instant messaging, video chat, and voice chat are examples of synchronous online communication. But asynchronous online communications do not occur on real time and everyone who contribute on this type of online communication not need to be connected to the Internet at the same time. Email is an example of asynchronous online communication.

In an overall perspective, sending and receiving emails, social networking, using instant Messaging services (IM), voice chat and video chat were the main categories of online communication channels among the studied samples. These communications environments provided setting for participants to communicate either with other individuals or groups of people.

Most of the samples that participated in this study preferred to use a portfolio of these online tools on the framework of an online communication “toolbox”. Through
time, based on their personal choices and needs, they usually developed a kind of “division of labor” between all these online communication channels; each of online communication tools was implemented in order to fulfill certain needs.

Participants were asked about these online communication tools and how much each used these tools. The question was sent online to their email and Facebook. Table 5.7 shows their answers. Email was the most common online communication tool among the studied samples. Almost all of the studied samples had at least on email address. After email, social networking platforms – particularly Facebook – were the next popular online communication channel and then instant messaging services were the third popular group of online communication tools among the studied samples.
TABLE 5.7: Popularity of different online communication tools among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online communication tools</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email services</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking platforms</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging services</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice chat</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video chat</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* This table was made based on a question which was sent online to the email address and Face book account of the Participants. In this question they were asked to show which of the tools are used by the samples. This table shows how many percent of the participants use each of the online communication tools.

![Bar chart showing the popularity of different online communication tools](chart.png)

*Figure 16: Popularity of different online communication tools among the studied samples*
5.6.1. Email services

Electronic mail or ‘email’ is the oldest form of online communication that for the first time launched in 1970s. Email is considered as one of ‘asynchronous’ types of online communication in which sender and receiver need not to be connected to the Internet (online) on the time of communication. In many cases, email addresses worked as a source of online identity for participants. For example, for any type of online subscription they had to provide an email address

For a long time after the popularity of the Internet on 1990s, sending and receiving emails were the most prominent means of online communication. But after the advent and proliferation of the new types of online communication tools such as social networking platforms, emails were not used as the dominant type of online communication any more.

Almost all of the studied samples said that they regularly check their “mail box” mostly on daily basis as an important habit on their online lifestyle. The experienced participants who had longer history of online experience confessed that email services were not as important as the “old days”. They said that they had gradually shifted to the new online environments such as social networking platforms and instant messaging services which offer more dynamic messaging services.

It was observable that many of the studied samples have developed a kind of new balance between the messaging environments – email services, social networking platforms and instant messaging services. Many of the participants said that they send and receive more official messages through traditional email services – the most prominent service providers were Gmail and Yahoo Mail. They also confessed that to send and receive more personal messages such as messages between friends and family members they mostly relied on social networking platforms such as Facebook and instant messaging services such as WhatsApp. In other words, emails were generally used for more formal online communications, while informal messages were usually exchanged on social networking and/or instant messaging environments.

It is also noticeable that, for some participant email still was the dominant messaging environment. These participants who were usually older than the others, were those who always had not been adapted to the new social environments of social
networking and/or instant messaging and did not have enough online skills adopted to the new dynamisms of online communication.

5.6.2. Social Networking platforms

Social networking was a notable category of online communication among the studied samples. “Social networking platforms provide social interaction environment and let “to create a public profiles, to create a list of users with whom to share their interest and activities” (Ellison, 2008).

Social networking platforms along with instant messaging services by far were the most prominent theme of online activity among young Muslim participants. A great majority of them use different social networking platforms – above all Facebook – in everyday basis. Most of the participated Muslims regularly shared items and updated their status and their profiles, they “liked” or “re-shared” others’ shared items as well and left comments on what others had shared. Social networking was highly addictive experience and rarely those who have experienced social networking leave it easily.

5.6.2.1. The hegemony of Facebook

Today considering its population, Facebook can be known as one of the largest human societies in the world. India with a growth rate of 132% by 2015 will have more Facebook users than any other country in the world. With its availability on all devices, Facebook allows users to continuously stay in touch with their friends, relatives and other acquaintances in both synchronous and asynchronous ways.

Facebook was the dominant and most popular social networking platform among Muslims of Mysore. Great majority of them said that they actively use Facebook. For many of the respondents, Facebook was the pathway to the Internet; they had begun using the Internet, only to use Facebook. It explains why in some cases they use Facebook interchangeably to refer to of the Internet. In fact, using the Internet for many of the respondents thoroughly meant using Facebook.
5.6.2.2. Other social networking platforms

Beside Facebook there were other social networking platforms which the participants regularly used. But none of these social networking platforms had the popularity of Facebook. The other noticeable social networking platforms were Twitter, Google+, Linkedin, Tumblr and Pinterest. Table 5.8 portrays the level of popularity of each of these social networking platforms among the studied participants.
TABLE 5.8: Popularity of different social networking platforms among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social networking platforms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google +</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumbler</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: This table was made based on a question which was sent online to the email address and Facebook account of the Participants. In this question they were asked to show social networking platforms which they regularly use. This table shows how many percent of the participants use each of the online communication tools.

Figure 17: Popularity of different social networking platforms among the studied samples
5.6.2. Instant Messaging services

Instant messaging services also provide both, synchronous and asynchronous online communication facilities. However using instant messaging as a synchronous online communication service was trendier among the participants. Instant messaging services also provide PtP (person to person) as well as group to group communication possibilities.

Although instant messaging can be used on all the devices – desktop, laptop, mobile and tablet – but usually using these services were more common on smart phones and tablets. Instant messaging services were very popular among the studied Muslims particularly among young participants. A great majority of them regularly used instant messaging services on their smart phones. In many cases instant messaging services were the alternatives of older types of communication. Even in many cases, instant messaging services were more popular than social networking platforms. For example in the case of informal communications, instant messaging services such as WhatsApp were the undisputedly predominant online environments.

The most common IM services among the studied samples were Yahoo Messenger, Google Talk (also known as Google Hangout), Viber, Whatsapp, Tango and Line; although some WhatsApp and Viber were the most popular among the others. Table 5.9 portrays the popularity of each of the Instant Messaging services among the studied samples.

Online text messaging has roots on SMS services on mobile phones which has been one of the major themes of social communication during the last decade; online text messaging via IM services provide more diversified experience with notably wider audiences. It is also important to note that IM services are free and it is an important reason why IM services were preferred by the studied samples.

The quick, instantaneous and omnipresent communications on instant messaging were very important features that had attracted many of the participants in a way that as time passed, many of their online activities which were predominantly experienced on
social networking platforms shifted to IM services. It explains why social networking platforms – e.g. Facebook, or Google plus – added many instant messaging features to their platforms. In the case of Facebook, the solution to compete with the rising competitor was buying that with a tempting price; Facebook bought WhatsApp on 2014 for 12 Billion US dollars. It is also important to note that the boundaries between social networking platforms and IM services are becoming shallower and sometimes not easily recognizable.

Mobile Internet was in the center of this new online communication dynamism. Fast and omnipresent online communication which eliminated many spatial boundaries – as they were online almost everywhere – as well as temporal boundaries – as they were online almost every time – played very crucial role. Almost unavoidable consequence of using instant messaging services via smart phones connected with mobile Internets was increasing the size of communication circle and being in touch with more people. Keep in touch with a larger number of friends needed more communication skills and engagement. In order to manage their ever expanding online communication circles, the participants had to develop a sort of online skill along with spending more time engaged with their constant online communication dynamism. They needed constant alacrity and social communication management.
TABLE 5.9: Popularity of different Instant Messaging services among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Messaging Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viber</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tango</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hike</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NimBuzz</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y!Messenger</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Popularity of different Instant Messaging services among the studied samples
It was particularly observable among the young participants who their constant engagement on online communication had clearly changed the pace of their social communication experience. For many of them, the speed or vast dimensions of their online communication was not amazing or unaccustomed; it was an ordinary and taking for granted attribute of their communication habits.

They were always “online” and constantly kept communicating, mainly through instant messaging services – particularly WhatsApp – and then social networking services on their smart phones. They could respond very fast and accordingly they were very successful on managing their online communication circles. The fast dynamism of their online communication needed not only particular skills, but also faster reactions. But it was interesting that they were highly accustomed to this pace of communication and could not tolerate the “slow” rhythm of other forms of communication.

While younger Muslim participants always considered other forms of communication “unbearably slow”, in contrast, their parents who were always not accustomed and skilled Internet users, usually were not comfortable with this new communication dynamism and in many cases they wondered how their children could coup with such a fast pace of communication. For example, Muzaffar who was 46 years old Teacher explained his children communication habits as this:

“I don’t understand how they can text all the day with their phones and at the same time they can do their jobs! I think their words are endless! How they can prepare their answers such fast?”

5.6.3. Voice and video chat

Voice and video chat are other types of synchronous communication which provides real time communication on which the two sides communicate should be online on the time of communication. Video and voice chat are technically a kind of instant messaging services. Besides text messaging which was the most prominent type of interpersonal communication among the studied samples, a smaller portion of interpersonal communications among the participants was conducted through video and voice chats. Considering the fact that many of the participants used smart phones and
mobile Internet connections, it was not surprising that many of them were always online; accordingly, free voice chat on IM services was an economic alternative for phone calls.

While texts messages were always used for quick and immediate conversations, always with short messages and full of abbreviations – typing text on mobile phones was always very slow and to speed up, participants used abbreviations – voice and video chats were usually common types of communication when the participants wanted to be engaged with lengthier and more in-depth impersonal conversations. Text messaging was more observable among the younger participants who always had more noticeable online skills and always could intrinsically find how to implement each of these tools in certain situations in order to fulfill certain communication needs.

5.6.4. Learning online communication skills

The Internet has dynamic and highly interactive nature. In such an interactive environment, participants needed to learn certain skills. Basically, most of the participants did not have any kind of education to learn these skills; they had learnt their skills on an ‘online socialization’ process through time. In other words, they had effectively learnt each of their online skills through a process of confronting with a certain challenge and always some consequence of their unfamiliarity with necessary skills, then they had realized that they needed to learn about certain issues on the Internet to avoid confronting with the same challenge and through such dynamism, they had developed a set of online skills. In other words, the process of learning online communication skills was more based on trial and error and feedback mechanism rather than systematic learning and education.

The new comers always spent a period of time to “discover” the online space to find what the features of interactive environment on the Internet were. They did not know the norms of online communication and usually, the experienced Internet users could recognize them very quickly. The new comers always did not know how to properly find, use and share information and how to safely protect their valuable information. But usually as time passes, they also grasped at least some of the basic necessary skills to live
in online space. It is important to mention that young participants were always better on learning online skills.

5.6.5. Online communication circles

Communication is a process with some fundamental attributes including the sender, the message, the medium and the receiver. So, it can be concluded that any communication process engages at least two counterparts, a sender and a receiver and creates a connection tie between the two sides. Effective ties and connectedness are key features of online experience. Connectedness has different levels; it can be referred to being connected to friends and relatives, or it can be referred to being connected to people with whom, Internet users do not have any real world acquaintance and/or face to face contact.

Through time, Internet users develop several ties through different processes of online communication and as the results they develop a network of connections; these networks can be called “communication circles”. An “online communication circle” consists of all the other Internet users with whom an Internet user has any kind of online communication. It may include individuals or groups of users; it can be very temporary or last lifelong.

In this study, two major attributes of “online communication circles” were studied among Muslim participants; the size of their online communication circles and the composition of their online communication circles. It is important to mention that both, the size and the composition of online communication circles differed from one respondent to the other respondent and each of them had some unique characteristics; but the intention in this research was to discover the average size and the common characteristics of their online communication circles.

Through studying the size of online communication circles, the main question was “with how many people they communicate on the Internet?” and by the main question that was asked in studying the composition of online communication circle was “with whom they communicate on the Internet?”
5.6.5.1. Size of online communication circles

The size of online communication circles shows the level of online sociability of the participants. In other words, it represents the magnitude of their online communication. It is important to mention that the size of online communication circle is not a static: it usually increases through time as users find more and more friends.

The size of online communication circles of the participants was the consequence of several psychological and social factors. For example those samples who had more ‘extrovert’ personalities usually tended to have more social interactions on the Internet and consequently, they had larger communication circles comparing with those participants with ‘introvert’ personalities who were usually less likely to have social communication with a lot of people and as the result had smaller online communication circles.

At the other hand, there were sets of values and cultural codes, beliefs and norms shared between the participants that regulated how they should interact with each other and these socio-cultural factors also affected the size of their online communication circles. For example Islamic cultural codes always regulated social interactions between men and women, and as Islamic culture has relatively restricted norms to regulate these relations, the online communication of the samples were considerably affected and the magnitude of their online communication was decreased.

Facebook was used as the main platform to study the size of online communication circles among participants. The logic behind this technique was that Facebook was the main social networking platforms among the participants and it could be expected that all those people with whom they communicated on the Internet should be on their Facebook as well. Two distinctive size of online communication circle – “potential size” and “actual size” – were evaluated by implementing two different techniques.

On one hand, the potential size of online communication circle of the samples was calculated by counting the size their Facebook “friend lists”. The size of their Facebook “friend lists” could show potentially how big could be the size of their online communication circles. Figure 19 the potential size of online communitarian circles and the actual size of online communication circles among the studied samples are compared.
On the other hand, it was observable that having a larger friend list was usually a source of social credit among the studied samples. Participants always tended to have larger friend list to show off their sociability and to get social credit. Most of them accepted all “friend requests” in Facebook, no matter if they knew the person who has requested for friendship or not; they also sent friend requests to many people who did not know as well.

In other words, although the size of friend lists of participants could show even thousands of friends – which meant they could have contact with 1000 individuals – but in the real world, they were not actually communicated with that much of other people. So another technique was implemented. A question was sent to them again through online channels – email and Facebook – in which they were asked about “whit how many people they communicated on the Internet?” The answers were showed considerable difference.
5.6.5.2. Compositions online communication circles

“The composition of online communication circles” is another noticeable attribute of online communication circle. It is about the people with whom Internet users communicate. Observation and interviews were implemented to find the answers of the question of “with whom they communicate on the Internet?”

The studied participants communicate with both ‘in-group’ users – those who belonged to Muslim community of Mysore and ‘out-group’ user – those who did not belong to Muslim community of Mysore. But in an overall view, their online communications were more in-group oriented; they mostly looked at the Internet as a complementary “communication tool” to re-construct their real-world social relationships rather than creating new social ties on online space.

The composition of online communication circles among the younger participants was more friend-oriented, and in case of their parents, the composition of their online communication circles was more family-oriented. Younger participants were more intended to communicate with their friends and classmates rather than their family members while their parents were more in touch with their relatives. It can be explained by considering the fact that Muslim community of Mysore, traditionally have had family-centered social structure. Family ties still played the most important role in shaping the social characteristics of Muslims in Mysore. But such “centrality” of family ties was gradually challenged. It was observable among younger Muslims that they had not the precedential attention to their family ties comparing with their parents. Such change was highly represented on their online activities as well.

Among them, friendship and “peer groups” played more important roles. This process was paralleled with their intention of having a more individualistic lifestyle in which they needed more liberal social interactions. They could find such a liberal social interaction more with their friends rather than their family members and relatives; and the Internet was an important tool to achieve that liberal individualistic social interaction.
The other observable factor that affected the composition of online communication circles among Muslims of Mysore was their religious identities. Many of the participants, particularly those who had stronger religious orientations, were so keen to communicate with other Muslims outside their own community. In many cases, they had online relations with Muslims in other countries particularly Muslims in Pakistan with whom they shared Urdu as their mother tongue as well and Muslims in Arabic countries with whom they had deep sympathy. It seemed that they had appetite to know more about other Muslims or as they call it Islamic *Umat*. It was a kind of curiosity about an old “lost connection” with other Muslims of the world.

The Internet had provided an opportunity for them to look for that “lost connection”. In many interviews they mentioned that the Internet was a “blessing technology” that had let them to be connected with other Muslim brothers and sisters around the world with whom they had been disconnected for a long time.

However, again in the case of younger participants who usually had less observable religious orientations comparing with the older generations of Muslims in Mysore, it was less observable to emphasis on religious identities of people with whom they looked ties on online space. They were rather more secular on their online communications and had many friends with any religious background and religious identities were not important denominator to compose the circles of their online communications.

An observable change during the fieldwork was that most of the participants in this study, from all age and gender groups, had been gradually expanding their social interactions on the Internet and as the result, not only the size of their online communication circles had been constantly growing, but also the composition of their online communication circles had been turning to more complicated and divers communication circles.

For the newcomers – those participants who did not have a long history of online experiences – the new online environment was more like an “unknown territory” in which they had to discover. But the longer they used the Internet the more adequately
they developed their online communication skills and learnt a lot about how to find new relations on online space, and how to manage the ever expanding online communication circles.

In the most cases, when they initiated their online communication experience, they tried to find people who they knew on real world – very close friends, family members and relatives, then other group of friends, classmates, colleagues, and acquaintances – to re-construct their face to face interactions on online space, but gradually as they turned to more experienced Internet users, they began exceeding the boundaries of their “offline social ties” and looked for new online counterparts outside of their offline communication circles. They always expanded their online communication circles by adding up people with whom they shared common interests. They usually could find these new purely online relations through contributing on online communities such as Facebook pages and groups.

It is important to mention that as time passed, the online and offline communication circles of the participants highly intermingled in a way that sometimes, recognizing the boundaries between the two was not easy. Through time, many of used to offline relations were replaced by the online edition and a new dynamism of social communication was emerged. Many friends, who met regularly through face to face relations, had replaced online communication as an effective alternative which could satisfy their needs of affection and friendship. As the results, it can be claimed that online communication had altered the patterns of offline relations; but it does not mean that online relations necessarily had weakened offline social ties. But it can be confidently claimed that, online communications, has changed the social communication habits of Muslims in Mysore.

5.6.6. Online communication habits

Online communication is a highly diversified experience. Plenty of different combinations of activities are intermingled together to create different online communication habits of Internet users. Some of these habits are particularly observable on certain communication environments, such as instant messaging services or social
networking platforms, while some others are commonly observable on all types of online communication environments.

Several factors affect the online communication habits of Internet users. Besides social, cultural and psychological factors which are obviously important denominators of online communication habits of Internet users, technological constructions of online communication ecosystems also are important denominators in shaping online communication habits of Internet users.

In this study, those effective social, cultural and psychological factors are discussed on the technological framework on online communication environments. These technological constructions on online communication environments have been designed by IT giants to canalize the online activities and online habits of Internet users. Analogically, it is similar to urban planning in which the macro-scale construction of the urban setting has been designed by a kind central authority such as municipalities or governments, and micro-scale construction of that urban setting has been shaped by civilians whose activities are shaped on the framework of the macro-scale urban design.

In this sense, the technological constructions of online space have with it a kind of authority – or power – that can shape the frameworks for online activities of Internet users. The IT companies and developers possess such online authority to formulate the frameworks of online activities of Internet users. Here, the online communication habits of participants have been discussed on these technological frameworks.

5.6.6.1. Personal profiles; online identities

In most of online communication environments including social networking platforms and instant messaging services, in order to use any kind of online communication facility, users first need to provide a group of general information through “subscription process”. The information usually includes name, gender, age, nationality, marital status along with authentic contact information such as an email address and/or a mobile number – as it is common in most of the new generation of instant messaging services.
After the subscription process is done, the users will have a “personal space” which is usually known as “profile”. These profiles are the “showcase” of Internet user where all the information about the Internet user – which was provided through subscription process – is represented. Along with this general information, users can also add – optionally – some more information about themselves. They also can share almost all kinds of contact information, ideas and life experiences such as education, job experience and so on.

In other words, the personal profiles are the “center of gravity” for online life of Internet users as most of their online activities are accumulated on these profiles. Gradually, profiles become the repository of online experiences of Internet user and the configuration of the profiles regulates their online identities. An important part of the observation process in this study was concentrated on evaluating the personal profiles of the studied samples.

It was observable that the participants regularly visited others’ profiles; it was always the case that through visiting one’s profile, they evaluated and judged about the configuration of those profiles; and participants, always compared their own profiles with others’. In many interviews, they said that the judgment about one’s profile could affect the ways through which they regulated how to communicate with him or her. In other words, in a great extend the configuration of personal profiles shaped the structure of online interactions. Analogically, it is very much like the fact that the personal appearance and dress codes of a person can affect the ways other people formulate their relationship with him or her.

Reciprocally, most of the participants knew that their profiles could be the subject of others’ evaluation and judgment and that such evaluation and judgments could affect their online interaction. It explains why many participants were always worried about the configuration of their personal profiles. One of the common communication habits among the studied samples was the efforts to “improve” personal profiles to “manage” others’ evaluation and judgment; and always to attract, more attention, more appreciation, and better evaluation and judgments.
It was observable that as time passed, and through the process of trial and error, participants gradually recognized the tastes of the others – technically those in their communication circles – and learnt how to better improve their personal profiles. In other words, through time they developed a skill of how to “construct” their images. As the results, their profiles were always highly engineered installations of obsessively selected contents. This process can be called “personality marketing” and it was a very common habit among many of the Muslim participants.

5.6.6.2. Sharing information and contents

Social networking platforms and instant messaging services were the most popular online communication environments among the participants. These two are highly interactive online ecosystems where all the contents are being provided and shared by individual users; in these online ecosystems, the “technological authorities” – developers and companies – only provide the frameworks.

Participants share contents, express their feelings, thoughts, daily activities and those contents which they found interesting all through their personal profiles. They wrote note, they shared pictures, links, and videos, etc. Many of the participants also updated their status to let their friends to know what they do or think at the moment. They can also provide feedbacks for the contents shared by the others to show appreciation, confirmation, and these two are the two sides of interactive dynamism of online communication on social networking platforms and instant messaging services.

The online habits of sharing contents and information and providing feedbacks to what others shared were important parts of online activities of the participants that provided a reliable source for observation and evaluation for the researcher.

As the very considerable share of online activities of the participants was accumulated on their Facebook, observing Facebook activities of participants was a reliable source of evaluation and participant observation. For a long time, the contents shared by the participants were categorized. Table 5.10 shows the categories of contents shared by the participants.
### TABLE 5.10: Content sharing trends among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Messaging Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qoats</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokes</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic contents</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 20: Content sharing trends among the studied samples](image)

Figure 20: Content sharing trends among the studied samples
5.6.6.3. Providing feedback

The process of sharing in the interactive online environments such as social networking platforms and/or instant messaging services always are complemented by another process; providing feedbacks. These feedbacks were very important in online interactive contexts. Because they provide a regulation basis through which participants could learn how to communicate more effectively. The feedback process was the basis of “online acculturation” and “online socialization”. Providing feedbacks also was an important online communication habit among the participants.

There were two major feedback mechanisms: “like buttons” and “commenting”. While “like buttons” provided quantitative feedbacks, “comments” provided qualitative feedbacks. These two feedback mechanisms together provided a kind of punishment and rewarding system through which the participants’ relations were regulated. An “accepted content” could get more “like” and more “positive comments”; it technically meant that more people had appreciated that content and in contrast, an “unaccepted content” could get less “like” and more “negative comments”. The positive and negative feedbacks played the role of rewards and punishments and as the result the participants could “learn” what they should share and what should not.

5.6.6.3.1. Like button

“Like buttons” were very important features of social networking ecosystems that allowed users to express their appreciation in a dichotomous way – yes or no. “Like buttons” provided the chance for users to push the button if they liked the content and not if they did not like that. Some social networking platforms – such as Youtube – have “dislike button” which allows users to push the “dislike button” and give quantitative negative feedback if they do not like the content.

This button usually is known as “like button”, however in some social networking platforms they have chosen another name for that; for example in Google plus, like button is called “+1 button”; but the concept and the mechanism is the same.
To have a better understanding of quantitative feedback mechanism, we need to interpret this mechanism on the context of highly competitive environment of online space. Most of the participants in this study were engaged on an unending competition to achieve more attention and appreciation. For them, the number of “likes” represented their success in the competition. They try to find or in some sense “hunt” better content in order to achieve more “like” which can be interpreted as more social credit.

In one sense, “Like buttons” played the same role that money does play in economic systems’ it is the quantitative measurement tool for evaluating one’s success in the economic system. The important and crucial role of “like buttons” explains why “Like buttons” have migrated out of social networking ecosystem as well. If one remember WebPages prior to the proliferation of social networks – the era which known as the WEB 1.0– those WebPages had a remarkable difference comparing with the current ones. After the advent and proliferation of social networking platforms, especially Facebook –the era known as WEB 2.0 – we encounter with omnipresence of social networking feedback features across the web. Today in most of the web pages, one can see “Like buttons” which are synchronized with the personal profiles of users on social networking platforms. It can be interpreted that social networking ecosystems are re-arranging the web contents based on their own punishment and rewarding systems.

5.6.6.3.2. Providing comments

Another major feedback mechanism was “commenting” which provided qualitative feedbacks. It was an observable trend among the studied samples to make comments on the others’ shared contents. But it was less popular comparing with pushing “like buttons”, as writing comment took more time and it was prominently the case that the participants were less intended to give their feedback in the form of comments.

Commenting is more similar to the feedback mechanism in the real world. While like buttons provide a binary basis in which users express the simplest and the most basic feedback to the content, like or not, but in the real world people are more likely to talk about things and express their positive or negative feedbacks.
When they provided their comments, it was always the case that a conversation was begun. So, it explains why comments were not necessarily used only for feedback purposes. In many cases, commenting features were being used as a conversation environment. Sometimes, clarifying the boundaries between the conversation and feedback was not easily recognizable because technically the two were overlapped.

Participants had different attitudes on providing comments. Some participants usually tried to start arguments by posting outrageous or negative, and even sometimes offensive comments, some others provided more information about the shared contents without evaluating the content and some others usually provided approval and support of the content. The personal interpretation of the researcher is that psychological properties on participants were the most effective factor that changed their moods of commenting. Visiting many of the participants on the real world and looking who they talk about others reinforced this interpretation.

5.6.6.3.3. Re-sharing the contents

Another way of giving an indirect feedback – usually positive feedbacks, approval and support – was re-sharing the contents. Analogically, it was like citation on the academic context. Participants, who re-shared others’ content, usually gave the credit of “discovering” that content to the user who had shared that content first. It could show support and approval of the content and a kind of gentle relation with the user who had shared that content first. However it was always the case; in few cases, participants used re-sharing feature only to accelerate their online activities and they did not mean to give and credit to the user who had shared that content first. For any reason, re-sharing others’ shared contents was another noticeable online communication habit among the participants.

5.6.6.4. Public conversation

Engagement on public conversations was another major category of online communication habit of participants. These conversations shaped rich online contexts and they were usually written and most of the time took place about particular topics; therefore, those participants who were usually engaged on these conversations were
interested about a particular topic and looked for more information and peers about that topic on the Internet.

Public conversation could take place between individuals or between groups of users. It also could be synchronous or asynchronous and almost all the online communication environments have some conversation features in which participants contributed on conversations. Online communities played highly important role; participants usually joined to several online communities which were always bounded by a particular common interest which always regulated the conversations.

5.6.7. Online communication etiquettes

Online communication etiquettes – or as some call it netiquettes – are important skills needed in any online communication environment. Online communication etiquettes are cultural codes that regulate the online behavior of Internet users.

The online communication etiquettes may vary depending on the contexts of communication; for example formal communications of participants were regulated with different sets of codes comparing with their informal communications. The online communication etiquettes indicated what polite, respectful and correct attitude and at the other hand, what other behaviors were not.

Generally, there were several sources of online communication etiquettes among the studied samples. Some of these online communication etiquettes were the reconstruction of their offline etiquettes on online space, while some others were mainly developed on the online environment and in many times, were related to the technical features of online communication ecosystems.

For example, many participants mentioned that they had some friends who were “overactive”. These over-active users excessively shared contents on social networking platforms and instant messaging services and it was always the case that other users were bothered by these over sharing process. Being overactive on the Internet is very much like being talkative persons on the real world which does not allow others to talk and it is always an annoying problem in a face to face conversation.
However, it has psychological reasons, but talking with some of these overactive users clarified that some made this mistake because they did not know enough about online communication etiquettes. They did not realize that it could bother other users; and also in many cases they did not know the different functions of “like buttons” and “share buttons” on social networking environments. Normally, participant repeatedly pushed “like button” for many shared contents to show appreciation and approval, but normally, it was not common tendency to share a lot of content every day.

5.7. Online entertainments

For hundreds of years – at least since the proliferation of printing Medias after Gutenberg – medias have had three major roles in societies which include providing information, entertainment and education (Brigs and Burk, 2010). The Internet has dramatically affected all the three realms. The magnitude of this change has been big enough to shake the dynamism of all the three realms and to the emergence of new forms on each realm. Entertaining on the Internet – or online entertainment – was another major theme of online activity among the studied samples. However it was trendier among the younger respondents.

Generally, defining the boundaries between “entertainments” versus “non-entertainment” on online activities of the participants was not direct and easily recognizable in many cases, but in this research several major themes of activities have been classified on the category of “online entertainments” including playing online games, listening to online music, watching online videos and sharing photo on the Internet were the most prominent categories of online entertainment among the studied samples.

Such as other realms of online activity, online entertainments also were taking place on multi-media ecosystems where text, image, audio and video were combined to create online experiences pertained to entertainment. Online entertainments were majorly social activity. Interestingly, most of these activities were took place on social settings; it can be claimed that only few of the participants experienced of online entertainment out of the interactive social contexts.
They always shared the games they played and invited their Facebook friends to play the same game; they also share any content which they felt was interesting such as videos, music, or any interesting photos.

Whatever is the entertaining activity was the social attributes of such entertainment were profoundly observable. Such intention was also reflected on the design of online entertainment services; most of the online entertainment services had a kind of social basis; considerable share of their online entertainment traffic went through social networks.

Again smart phones played very important role on the online entertainments of participants. Most of the participants who were regularly engaged on online entertainment activities used their smart phones as the main online ecosystem.

It explains why online entertainment developers prioritize the development of mobile applications and most of online entertainment activities were accessible on mobile devices. These developers focus on mobile phones to fulfill ever expanding expectations of Internet users to shift to the new digital ecosystem of smart phones.

Accordingly, their online entertainment activities were not limited to any place or any time and they could be constantly engaged with a kind of online entertainment. It dramatically changed the dynamism, conceptualization and habits of their offline entertainments as well.

Those participants who were mainly engaged with mobile entertainments had a kind of creativity and time management; it was observable attitude among them that they usually used even very short time gaps to entertain on their smart phones. They carried their smart phones with them almost everywhere and in any moment that they felt they had free time, even for very few minutes, they began using their mobile phones for a kind of entertainment such as watching a short video, or playing an online game or listening music.
5.7.1. Online games

Online games or video games which are played via the Internet can be either social games in which player play the game with other real players or single player games in which players play with “machine” or literally artificial intelligence. The studied samples were more indented to social games. Many of these social games were synchronized with social networking platforms and made online games more as a form of social networking activity.

Online games were more popular online entertainment activity among the younger participants. In many of the interviews they mentioned that playing games was among their permanent online activities. Online games can be categorized on various genres range from simple text-based games to games which incorporate complex graphics and virtual effects. There are different genres of online games.

Gambling was a common trend among them. Mostly young participants were engaged on gambling on digital games. Many of places where were cyber cafés had changed into networked game zones. Young Muslims went to these game zones to compete with each other. Mostly they played such Counter strike, and usually they were engaged on gambling and competition. Table 5-11 portrays different genres of online games and the popularity of each among the studied sample.
TABLE 5.11: Online gaming trends among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Messaging Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table Games</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Games</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card Games</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Games</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Games</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi player Games</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21: Online gaming trends among the studied samples
5.7.2. Photo sharing

As time passed, images were becoming the dominant type of online content online traffic of the participants. Most of the participants preferred images to the other forms of online contents. They were less intended to read a text comparing with visiting photos. In this sense it can be claimed that photos were the center of gravity on online activities of the participants and explains why images were more exchanged among them. A great majority of online contents which were shared and re-shared on social networking platforms and instant messaging services were images.

Images played very important role in the continuation of interactive online exchange between the participants. Personal photos were the most common types of images which were exchanged between them. They usually tried to share the best of their photos and there was observable tendency among most of them to decorate their photos in a way that they could show some particular possessions on the photos. For example it was quite common trend to show off their cars, their motorcycles or their houses. In another words, they had a kind of strategy to show their lifestyle and affluence.

Another interesting trend was that usually Muslim women were highly reluctant to show their faces on the photos they publish on the Internet. It was more observable in the cases that they did not have *Hijab*.

Smart phones played very important role again. There are plenty of image-friendly applications on mobile phones which were synchronized with social networking platforms. Most of photos were shared on social networking platforms and above all on Facebook and *Instagram*. Many of the participants were engaged on photo sharing process and usually they used a combination of smart phones, social networking platform and instant messaging services to contribute on the visual dynamism of online space.

Photo sharing played very important role on the continuation of their online engagement. They tend to keep connected with the flow of information circulation and nothing was easier and somehow more tempting than sharing photos. It can be called “visual conversation”; one shared a photo, others came and pushed “like button” – or not
– and gradually based on the numbers of “likes” participants could realize how to publish the next photos and the process continued.

Most of participants said that they regularly checked new photos published by their friends on Facebook several times a day and cared about what was “coming up”. There was an ongoing competition for better feedbacks, and participant always tend to find a more interesting scene or better positions to take “better” photos. A natural consequence of such effort was extra attention to the surrounding world, because they constantly looked to find more impressive scenes. Selfi was very popular; most of their smart phones had “front camera”, and most of the participants usually used these “front cameras” to take photos of them known as “selfi”.

Besides personal photos, other types of photos were also shared by participants; but other types of photos were not as popular as personal and family photos. Few of the studied samples regularly shared artistic photos. There were some social networking platforms such as Pinterest or Flickr which were particularly used by participants for image-based social networking, but these image-based social networking platforms were not very popular among the studied samples comparing with Facebook and Instagram.

5.7.3. Online music

Another major area of online entertainment among the studied samples was online music. Different types of activities could be categorized in this category such as streaming online music, downloading music and sharing music. Among all, streaming online music was more common activity.

Participants usually tended to hear online music through services which were designed for online music stream; among all Soundcloud was the most notably and popular online music service. These platforms have complementary social networking features along with mobile applications to provide interactive social environment for their users. In theses online environment, listening to music was a social activity. Many of the studied samples had at least one of these applications on their smart phones; they prominently listened to online music and shared them when they liked a music track.
Another common type of activity among the participants was downloading music. They downloaded music to have it on their devices offline – to hear that music when they were not connected to the Internet. Downloading music allowed them to save their limited data balance. Comparing with online music streaming, there were less tendency among the studied samples to download music. They said that as they were constantly online, there was no necessity for them to download music. They downloaded a track which when they liked that very much and wanted to hear that repeatedly. By far the most popular music genre among the participants was Indian pop music – particularly Bollywood music – and after that, English pop music was the next popular music genre among the participants.

Except music, there was another type of online entertainment in which audio contents were central; listening to podcasts and online radios. Very few of participants regularly listened to any kind of online radio or podcast. Some of the participants even did not know what a podcast was. It was a kind of particularity on using this type of online contents; usually listening to podcasts was more observable among those samples who had longer online experience, higher digital literacy and in many cases higher level of education.

5.7.4. Online videos

Another type of online entertainment among the studied samples was watching online videos and video-sharing. Basically, the most popular video sharing platform was Youtube; although there were some other platforms such as Vimeo, but comparing with Youtube, other video sharing platforms were not considerably popular. It was also important to mention that video sharing platforms such as Youtube and social networking platforms such as Facebook were highly interconnected and synchronized.

Comparing with photo-sharing, there was less tendency of video sharing among the participants. While most of the studied samples regularly watched videos either directly on Youtube or indirectly through social networking platforms like Facebook, but very few of them produced their own personal videos and shared them with others. In
other words, in case of online videos, opposite to photos, participants were more “consumers” than “producers”.

It can be claimed that video sharing platforms such as Youtube were becoming alternative for TVs. In fact, these video sharing platforms had changed the TV watching habits of the participants. In this sense, watching TV was more a social activity than before. It explains why TV channels try to adopt in the new media environment. They publish many of their programs on their official channels on Youtube and always have their official pages on social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter; they also try to constantly communicate with their audiences on the Internet to engage them with their channels.

There are different genres of online videos. Table 5.12 represents the video watching trends among the participants. Downloading videos also was very popular. Generally, there were several types of video that were more likely to be downloaded. These videos were always shared either privately between some participants or via group messaging on instant messaging services. In many cases, some participants carried some of these videos with them on their mobile phones to show them to their friends on face to face interactions.

Pornography videos, funny videos, popular music videos, full length movies and TV series and some videos with Islamic contents were the most types of videos which were downloaded by the studied samples. Downloading videos was not sometimes an easy task; it needed certain skills of searching, locating and then downloading the videos. Particularly in the case of full length movies which were always downloaded through “Torrent” services. It explains why comparing with downloading videos, streaming online videos were more popular among the participants.

Watching and downloading pornography videos were very popular between Muslim men. Evaluation of such trend among Muslim women was not easy. However, it does not mean that Muslim women did not watch pornography at all; in fact talking about pornography with Muslim women in an Islamic cultural context was not easily possible.
Many of pornography videos – especially those short videos which could be easily transferred between devices – were exchanged between young male participants. In most of the cases, these short pornography videos were shared during face to face interactions rather than online interactions and usually through offline file transferring features such as Bluetooth. One of the main concerns of Muslim parents regarding the negative impacts of the Internet usage was always the popularity of pornography contents among young Muslims.
TABLE 5.12: Video watching trends among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Messaging Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage Of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film &amp; entertainment</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV shows</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty and fashion</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorials</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; education</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 22: Video watching trends among the studied samples
5.7.4. Amateur contents

Before the advent and popularization of the Internet, production and distributions of entertainment contents were highly monopolized by professional producers and ordinary people were only the consumers or audiences. But the Internet has democratized the process of media production. The Internet has allowed ordinary people to be not only “the consumers” but “the producers” as well. Technological improvements on digital gadgets above all smart phones and digital cameras have amplified the democratization of media production. Anyone with a relatively cheap mobile phone, or digital camera and an access to the Internet can capture photos and record videos and relying on social networking platforms can publish them online to find remarkable numbers of audiences.

This trend was observable among the participants in this study as well. Many of them were not simply media consumers. They had established their own amateur “Medias” with their own audiences. It does not mean that they did not consume professionally made contents any more. It means that their media consumption habits have dramatically changed by the advent of the Internet.

Again, it is a feedback mechanism that regulated their media production strategies. Through time, they had gradually built an understanding about how to produce and disseminate online contents more effectively. They had developed a kind of media policy and a kind of long-time plan for their media production.

5.8. Online Learning and education

Internet is the biggest source of information in the whole history of human beings; this source of information is expanding on an unimaginable rate. Learning opportunities available on the Internet are unlimited. The Internet has altered how people learn and teach.

Generally, two major themes of online learning were observable among the studied samples: 1) those online activities which were in the framework of formal education such as using the Internet as tool to accomplish homework or preparing for
exams, 2) those online activities which were beyond the formal education, such as learning a new language on the Internet, or learn about Islamic thoughts and history.

Considering the demographic properties of the studied samples, it was not surprising that the first theme was trendier. The great majority of the participants in this study were students and for them, the Internet was an effective “tool” to improve their education process.

5.8.1. Social learning

Online learning was more a social activity than an individual one; they always learned things through social engagement. Accordingly many traditional boundaries of learning were not easily recognizable. Learning a new thing was always coincided with participation on social environments. Social Medias played crucial role. Most of the samples tended to share new things they had learnt with their friends. And reciprocally they could learn a lot from others; a process which can be called “collective learning”.

5.8.2. New sources of information

To learn something new, they less relied on traditional sources of information such as books. Instead in many cases, they learned things by new sources of information. For example, in many interviews, samples mentioned that they learn a lot through playing games or watching videos.

They usually used “search engines” such as Google to find new information sources that let them to learn something new. An important aspect of learning on the Internet was searching for information sources. A common trend was that they had for their endless questions and constantly searched for quick answers; always “information sandwiches”; short answers which were always found through a fast process full of short cuts to information sources.

Again, mobile Internet and smart phones were important features. They carried with them an omnipresent “answering machine”. They constantly posed new questions, and then very quickly picked up their answering machine, searched for information
sandwiches and discovered that quick answer; then the next question. It was an endless dynamism and an important part of online daily routine of them.

This process also needed certain skills. It always took time for them to achieve enough skills to find more effective sources of information. It is important to note that relying on the ameliorated of search engines and mobile apps with more powerful artificial intelligence helped them to achieve such skill in shorter time. The answers could be found on a webpage, in video tutorial, on a couple of images, or in a podcast. Although, they always preferred audio-visual answers and in case, if they had to read a text, they proffered short texts rather than a long text full of professional details. It explain why Wikipedia was very popular platform.

5.8.3. Homework

Using the Internet to do homework was very common among many of the studied samples. Many of them were students and they used the Internet in creative ways to do their homework and to improve their assignments. The most common pattern was searching for information sources, “locating” the proper sources of information related to the topic, copying the contents, rephrasing the content in a way that is not clear that it was not “copy-pasted” and then submitting the assignment. Again Wikipedia was a very popular platform.

However many people condemn this way of using the Internet as a “misuse” of the Internet, but it seems that it was a highly effective way of learning. To be successful in the “copy-paste” process, students needed to learn more about the topic and the force to read and rephrase the content usually was highly effective way of learning.

Using mobile applications which were designed for learning purposes were very popular. They used many mobile “apps” to learn online; such as using apps that helped them to memorize things or learn a new language, or apps that provided them electronic books and so on. Even several function applications were popular tools of learning process among them.

One popular source of online information among the sample was images and videos. Most of the samples preferred watching videos, or images or a slide shows rather than to learn something new. A popular way of learning something new was watching
video tutorials. In case if they wanted to know about something new, one of the very first option was always going to Youtube and looking for an appropriate video tutorial. Videos were very effective since provided the answer pretty easily, quickly and effectively, and always by pointing to the main relevant applicable points. The studied samples were asked about the search topics. Table 5.13 portrays the answers of participants to that question.
TABLE 5.13: Search trends among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instant Messaging Services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage Of users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 23: Search trends among the studied samples
There were other web-based sources of information; these sources of information also were reputedly used by many of the participants. However, most of the samples usually preferred “information sandwiches”. Except “information sandwiches”, few participants looked for more detailed and authentic sources of information. One option was always electronic book and articles. Another solution was MOOC. MOOC is the abbreviations for Massive Open Online Courses. Comparatively, there was very less intention for these courses among the studied samples. Very few of the studied samples said that they have contributed on a MOOC and a great majority of them even did not know anything about the concept.

Another popular online learning activity among the studied samples was learning about Islam. Many of them searched for more information about Islamic thoughts and history. Although many of them were worried because they believed that all the online sources of information about Islam were not trustworthy and it might negatively affects religious understandings users.

Along with doing homework, there are plenty of other things that they learnt online; but it is necessary to remember that only few of the studied samples continually and systematically used the Internet for learning things more than their formal education.

5.9. Online shopping

Online shopping is a rising trend in India. India is turning to be one of the most important online shopping hubs in the world. Many online retailers were popular among the studied participants. Many of the studied respondents mentioned in their interviews that they were regularly engaged on an online shopping process.

The process of online shopping for them began with searching for goods. They searched the Internet to find stuffs; no matter if it was a cloth or technology gadgets. The search for goods included search for the best available prices, search for offers, search for reviews, and search for the best retailer in terms of their services. After deciding about the goods, the next step was ordering and payment which again happened online, in many cases relying on the online banking systems. Sometimes, the process had a last step
which was contacting with consumer service in case of any issue which again happened online.

Such as other areas of online activities, online shopping also had social dimensions. An observable trend among many of the studied samples was to share their online shopping with their friends through social networks and instant messaging services. They informed their friends about their shopping and they discussed about the products on many cases.

At the other hands, most of the online shopping retailers (which are increasing boom) were highly engaged on social networking dynamism. These social networking activities played important role to communicate with the customers; they constantly communicated with their “audiences” and engaged them on a process of social activity which could finalize by the decision of shopping. Online shopping on mobile ecosystem was very popular. Almost all of the retailers had mobile application.

In an online survey, the samples were asked about their online shopping trends; they were asked to mention what are the most common types of goods which they purchased on the Internet. Table 5.14 shows the results of that online survey and portrays what types of goods which were more likely to be processed online.
TABLE 5.14: Online shopping trends among the studied samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home &amp; garden tools</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and stationary</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; gadget</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; beauty</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foods &amp; beverage</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 24: Online shopping trends among the studied samples