

A STUDY ON USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AMONG THE STUDENTS OF PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM TAMIL NADU

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Abstract - Social Networking Sites can be broadly defined as internet-based social spaces designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. Social Networking Sites allow users to manage, build and represent their social networks online. Although there are a number of social networking services that specifically target students, little has been published about the actual practices and the usage patterns of these so-called social networking services. The present study aimed at analysing the reasons for registering in the SNS and the various purposes and benefits of using the SNS. The study focused on registering the relationship between age and using the SNS for academic purpose and gender and using the SNS for entertainment purpose. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data and survey method was used for investigation a total of 110 randomly selected samples have been taken into consideration. Simple frequency, percentage analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and ranking method were used to analysis the collected data. ANOVA used to test the hypothesis. The majority of the respondents were using the SNS for communicating and interacting with their friends. A group of people using the SNS for communicating, mobilizing and organising national issues profiles and watch their professional activities. More number of respondents mentioned that SNS helps for their research and learning, promotion of reading and writing the web skills, increasing of virtual meeting with co research Scholars.

Key Words: SNS, Social Networking, User Study.

1.INTRODUCTION

Internet subsequently brought forward a plethora of advantages to human society and led to far reaching changes in various fields. The contribution of Internet is bringing forward the popularity of Social Networking Sites. Social Networking Sites are highly vital sites which are the precursors of communication development. Therefore, Social Networking Sites enable rapid communication and social interaction across the globe. Besides, innumerable facilities have been provided to those involved in Social Networking Sites. In India, the trend of using Social Networking Sites is quite alarming. More and more college students are drawn towards these networking sites enabling both communication and entertainment. Consequently this sets the backdrop of the study in order to probe into this phenomenon further. Interpersonal relationships are the foundation for learning and human development. Thus, it is

crucial to analyse how far Social Networking Sites are influencing interpersonal relationships among college students in the Indian context. India, as a developing country, has also incorporated the technological developments along with maintaining its core traditions. Social Media or SNS are symbols of the New Age revolution bringing lot more than such a mere medium of communication. It can be said that SNS has turned to be a social phenomenon affecting every superstructure of society along with its members. Hence, it is primordial to study the interpersonal relationships in Indian Society pertaining to Social Networking Sites in order to understand the phenomenon in a social context.

2.SOCIAL NETWORK SITES: A DEFINITION

Boyd Danah M. (2007) defined social network sites as "a web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system". The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. The term "social network site" to describe the phenomenon, the term "Social Networking Sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. The term "networking" coined for two reasons such as emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication. **Downes, S (2005)** stated that A social network is a collection of individuals linked together by a set of relations. Online social networking sites 'virtually' link individuals, who may or may not 'know' each other. As a result, they enable rapid exchange of knowledge, high levels of dialogue and collaborative communication through text, audio and video (**Siemens; 2006**). Hence, the inner base for the creation of SNS is nothing but the concept of social network. Social Networking Sites can be broadly defined as internet-based social spaces designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. Social Networking Sites allow users to manage, build and represent their social networks online. People use Social Networking Sites for countless activities of which the most common uses include connecting with existing networks, making and developing friendships/contacts, creating an online presence for their

users, viewing content/finding information, creating and customizing profiles and so on. Social Networking Sites are usually made up of other individuals; they might also include profiles of events, companies and even political parties. These Social Networking Sites have rapidly gained popularity.

2.1. Benefits of SNS for the students:

Being involved with a Social Networking Site gives college students many benefits. The following are some of the activities in which they can be engaged:

- ❖ **Create Profile:** Social Networking Sites provide features to create new profiles which are filled by biographical details, photos or videos, and their areas of interest.
- ❖ **Upload Videos/Photos:** These sites facilitate uploading of photos, videos and sharing with others. The users can promote their own personal videos by using this medium.
- ❖ **Creating and Advertising Events:** The events creating or joining features of SNS permit the user to publicize parties, workshops, conferences or gatherings that will be hosted. For instance, numerous users create events on links.com regarding attendance of a particular conference or seminar by the members.
- ❖ **Group Searching/Joining:** People can search various types of groups related to numerous fields and join these that are related to their fields of interest. There are various types of groups available on Social Networking Sites, such as, professional related, social based, fashion related, technology, news, library related, cultural associations, human rights, shopping, marketing, education, sports and tourism.
- ❖ **Friend Searching/Adding:** It also facilitates the search for particular types of friends and send friend requests to form part of friends list.
- ❖ **Message Post:** This is the most convenient way to communicate with friends through post and send messages across. **Chatting:** Social Networking Sites offer the facility of messaging and video based chatting with their friends.
- ❖ **Games:** They provide multiple types of gaming facilities. Anyone can become a member and access facility on their respective page.
- ❖ **Appearance and Layout:** Users can create their choice based appearances of individual web pages on these sites. They can also customize their content on sites before presenting it to others.

- ❖ **Tagging:** It is the process of providing a keyword to specific content to describe it according to own abilities and share it with others. The users can tag specific information to their friends.
- ❖ **Download applications:** It is a small program which is created by the users for various purposes.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Arjun, M (2015) determined the Influence of Social Networking Sites on the study habit of higher secondary students. A semi structured research questionnaire was designed to determine the factors of social networking sites that have influenced on higher secondary students. The investigator used random sampling method and the total sample size was 40 students. The target population of this study was defined as the students belonging to the higher secondary students in Mammalashery Government Higher Secondary School Piravom, Ernakulam. Findings of the study indicated that SNS had been greatly influenced among adolescents. The extend usage of media, usage pattern of SNS, the level of and study habit have been dealt scientifically in this paper. The study was also undertaken to determine how much time students actively use social media and if there has been an increase or decrease in usage over time and its impact on their study and academics.

Xu, Jie (2015) examined differences in Chinese and American researchers' uses of social networking sites (SNS). The study compared their attitudes and behaviours as determined from data collected in an online survey and a semi-structured focus interview. For various reasons, most international SNS are blocked in China, and were curious to see how this influences scholarly online communication.

A'lamElhuda, Daffalla (2014) aimed to study the impact of Facebook and others social networks usage on academic performance and social life among medical students. This was descriptive, analytical cross-sectional institutional-based study. 27 item self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 275 medical students at Faculty of Medicine - University of Khartoum. Respondents were selected using Simple random sampling technique. The prevalence of using the SNS is high and continues to increase. The prevalence of negative effect of using the SNS on academic performance is high. SNS help people to connect with each other's and don't affect their social activities or sport exercises.

Mbodila, Munieng (2014) investigated the impact of the use of social media on student learning, specifically, the level of engagement and collaboration between them while using Facebook. Students enrolled for the module 'Foundation Information Technology (FIT)' at one South African University was exposed to the Facebook social network as a platform for various academic activities. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the students at the beginning of the course to find out their familiarity with Facebook and at the end of the module to measure impact. The results obtained showed that Facebook use has a significantly increased impact on student's collaboration and engagement. This paper concluded that social media can be used as an educational tool to help students to collaborate and engage and recommends that universities embrace the uses of social media for teaching and learning.

Miyagamwala, Gulshan (2014) explored the impact of social networking sites on youth. The research is conducted on 100 youths between age group of 18 to 30 years, with a view to know the level of awareness on the social issues and how far SNS awakened today's youth in expressing their views on issues like corruption, human rights, girls education etc. Social networking websites like orkut, Facebook, Myspace and you tube are becoming more and more popular and has become part of daily life for an increasing number of people. Because of this feature young people are attracted to SNS. No doubt these SNS provides employment, marketing, personal growth, sharing of information but the most prevalent danger through often involves online predators or individuals. These SNS has great impact on youth of India.

Manjunatha, S (2013) aimed to present usage pattern of SNS by the Indian college students. A survey was conducted among 500 students in various colleges and universities throughout India. The findings of the study acknowledged the rampant usage of SNS among young college students in India. Their usage pattern of SNS, hours spending per week, gender differentiation in its usage, purpose of membership, their level of intimate relationships with online friends and much more interesting aspects have been dealt scientifically in this paper.

Chakraborty, Nirmali (2012) attempted to study the activities and reasons for using Social Networking Sites (SNS) by the research scholars of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU). The study has covered two social networking sites namely Facebook and ResearchGate based on popularity and widely used by research scholars. A self administered questionnaire was distributed among the research scholars of NEHU. It was found that most of the scholars from social science background use SNS from education and research point of view; on the contrary scholars from pure science think that SNS has no role on research and education. They use SNS just for entertainment.

The paper concluded with some suggestions given by the respondents for making SNS better research tool.

Tariq, Waqas (2012) focused on the education of student and the effect of social networking sites. Social Networks was only an electronic connection between users but unfortunately it has become an addiction for students, teenagers and even adults. This paper presented the impact of social networks on education, students and impact on life of teenagers, further it describes how social networking websites are auditory and dangerous for youth and teenagers.

Baruch, Alona Forkosh (2011) examined the use of social networking sites (SNS) by higher-education institutes in Israel. It identified activity patterns, content patterns, and interactivity in these institutes' Facebook and Twitter accounts. 47 Facebook accounts and 26 Twitter accounts of Israeli universities or colleges and/or sub-divisions within these institutes were examined. The study had the outcome of the activity pattern of academic institutes in SNS accounts which preserves a pattern according to which many accounts were active to a minor degree, while a minority of them was relatively active and suggested that these accounts were used in an assimilation mode. The study implied that the potential of SNS in higher education institutes in Israel has not been actualized to its fullest.

Roblyer, M.D (2010) studied the application of Facebook in the higher education. The study aimed to determine how likely higher education faculty are to use Facebook for either personal or educational purposes among faculty (n=62) and students (n=120) at a mid-sized southern university were surveyed on their use of Facebook and email technologies. A comparison of faculty and student responses indicate that students are much more likely than faculty to use Facebook and are significantly more open to the possibility of using Facebook and similar technologies to support classroom work. Faculty members are more likely to use more "traditional" technologies such as email.

4.OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the paper are –

- ❖ To analyse the reasons to register in the SNS
- ❖ To study the access and mode of using the SNS
- ❖ To measure the frequency level of using the SNS
- ❖ To study the various purpose of using the SNS
- ❖ To assess the various benefits of SNS
- ❖ To learn the role of SNS in education
- ❖ To study the relationship between age and using the SNS for academic purpose
- ❖ To study the relationship between gender and using the SNS for entertainment purpose

5.METHODOLOGY

This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, which required the use of questionnaires. A structured questionnaire designed to collect the data and survey method was used for investigation, as this was found to be the most appropriate method to carry out a survey in order to find out the growing importance and the use of social networking sites as a tool of learning. The area that has been selected for the present study is students of Periyar University, Salem which is one of the growing universities in South India. A total of randomly selected 110 samples have been taken into consideration. Simple frequency, percentage analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and ranking method were used to analysis the collected data. ANOVA used to test the hypothesis.

6.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No:1

Distribution of the respondents by Gender

Sl. No	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	65	59.1
2	Female	45	40.9
	Total	110	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by their gender. It is inferred that majorities (59%) of the respondents were male and remaining 41% of the respondents were female.

Table No:2

Distribution of the respondents by Marital Status

Sl. No	Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Single	69	62.7
2	Married	41	37.3
	Total	110	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by their marital status. It is inferred from the table that majorities (63%) of the respondents were single and 37% of the respondents were married.

Table No: 3

Distribution of the respondents by Nativity of Residence

Sl. No	Nativity	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Urban	52	47.3
2	Semi urban	11	10
3	Rural	47	42.7
	Total	110	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by their nativity of the respondents' residence. It is inferred that majorities (47%) of the respondents were living in urban and 43% of the respondents were living in rural. Around 10% of the respondents were living in semi urban area.

Table No:4

Distribution of the respondents by Age

Sl. No	Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 25	30	27.3
2	25-30	14	12.7
3	31-35	66	60
	Total	110	100

Table 4 shows the distribution of the respondents by their age. It is noticed that majorities (60%) of the respondents were belongs to 31-35 age group. Around 27% of the respondents were belongs to belong to below 25 years and 13% of the respondents were belongs to 25-30 years.

Table No: 5

Distribution of the respondents by Category of the Respondents

Sl. No	Category	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	PhD Scholar	69	62.7
2	MPhil Scholar	41	37.3
	Total	110	100

Table 5 shows the category of the respondents. It is noticed that majorities (63%) of the respondents were Ph D Scholars and 37% of the respondents were M Phil Scholars.

Table No: 6

Reasons to Register in SNS

Sl. No	Reasons	No	Mean		
1	To maintain existing friends / contacts	110	2	1.1	0.463
2	To find new friends	110	3.22	1.035	0.358
3	For business networking	110	3.35	1.224	0.283
4	To find activities	110	2.78	1.199	0.075

Table 7 shows the respondents opinion about the reasons to register in Social Networking Sites. Among the reasons listed, based on the mean value majorities of the respondents were registering in SNS to maintain existing friends and their contacts. Next group of people register for finding activities in the SNS. More people were registering in SNS for finding new friends and some of the respondents were registering for business related networks.

Table No: 7

Respondents opinion about number of friends linked with SNS

Sl. No	Category	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 25	11	10
2	25-50	39	35.5
3	51-100	11	10
4	Above 101	49	44.5
	Total	110	100

Table 8 shows the respondents opinion about number of friends linked with SNS. It is noticed that majorities (45%) of the respondents had more than 101 friends. Around 36% of the respondents had 25-50 friends. Around 10% of the respondents had 51-100 friends and another 10% of the respondents had below 25 friends list in their SNS.

Table No:8

Where do you access the Social Networking Sites

Sl. No	Places	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness
1	Library	110	3.99	0.981	-0.812
2	Department	110	3.58	1.309	-0.557
3	Home	110	1.75	0.696	0.392
4	Hostel	110	3.82	1.286	-0.812
5	Internet Café	110	4.27	0.898	-0.57

Table 9 shows the access point of the respondents for the SNS. It is inferred that based on the mean values, majorities (1.75) of the respondents were accessing the SNS in their Home. Next to that more number of respondents was accessing the SNS in the Departments and their hostel premises. A group of respondents were accessing the SNS in the library network centres and lesser of respondents were using the Internet Cafe for the SNS accessibility.

Table No: 9

In which mode do you access the Social Networking Sites

Sl. No	Mode	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness
1	Smart Phone	110	1.94	1.343	1.414
2	Tablet	110	4.01	1.161	-0.591
3	Laptop	110	1.83	0.633	0.155
4	PC	110	4.02	0.824	-0.034

Table 10 shows the mode of accessing the SNS by the respondents. Based on the mean and SD values, it is inferred that majorities (1.83) of the respondents were accessing the SNS in the Laptops. Next to that more numbers of people were accessing the SNS in their Smart Phones. Less numbers of respondents were using PC and tablets for access the SNS.

Table No: 10

Frequency level of using Social Networking Sites

Sl. No	Frequency	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Daily	63	57.3
2	Twice in a week	25	22.7
3	Once in a week	11	10
4	Monthly	11	10
	Total	110	100

Table 11 shows the frequency level of using the SNS by the respondents. It is noticed that majorities (57%) of the respondents were using the SNS in daily. Around 23% of the respondents were using the SNS in twice in a week. One ten of the respondents were using the SNS in once in a week and another one ten of the respondents were using the SNS monthly once.

Table No: 11

How many hours do you spend Social Networking Sites

Sl. No	Hours	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 1 hour	83	75.5
2	1-2	16	14.5
3	More than 3 Hours	11	10
	Total	110	100

Table 12 shows the hours spends by the respondents in the SNS. It is inferred that one third of the respondents were spending less than one hour in the SNS. Around 15% of the respondents were spending 1 to 2 hours for SNS. One out of ten of respondents were spending more than 3 hours in the SNS.

Table No: 12

Various Purpose to use SNS

Sl. No	Purpose	No	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Communicating and interacting with friends	110	2.02	0.69	1
2	Online Learning	110	2.05	0.669	2
3	Finding friends from online	110	3.15	1.065	8
4	Professional activities (searching job)	110	2.55	0.954	5
5	Academic purposes such as group discussion and getting study partners online	110	2.67	0.858	6
6	Social Networking Sites for watching movies	110	3.14	1.036	9
7	Connecting and interacting with business partners	110	2.83	1.03	7
8	SNS for communicating, mobilizing and organizing national issues profiles	110	2.43	0.67	4
9	Updating profile information's	110	2.13	0.56	3

Table 13 shows the various purpose of visiting the SNS by the respondents. Based on the mean and SD value, the various purpose of using the Social Networking ranked as, majorities of the respondents were using the SNS for communicating and interacting with their friends (M – 2.02). More number of respondents was using the SNS for online learning (M: 2.05). Updating the respondents profile information (M: 2.13) ranked third, Communicating, mobilizing and organising national issues profiles (M: 2.43) ranked fourth and for the professional activities (2.55) ranked fifth. A group of respondents was using the SNS for academic purpose such as group discussion and getting study partners in online (M: 2.67) rank sixth and connecting and interacting with business partners (M: 2.83) was ranked seventh. Finding friends from the online (M: 3.15) was ranked eight and lesser number of respondents were using the SNS for watching movies (M:3.14)

Table No: 13

Benefits to use the Social Networking Sites

No Sl.	Benefits	No	Mean	SD	Rank
1	It increases virtual meeting with co research Scholars	110	2.37	0.486	3
2	It increases self-esteem and well being	110	2.72	0.706	5
3	It helps in research and learning	110	1.96	0.557	1
4	It support collaborative and peer to-peer learning	110	2.65	0.658	4
5	It helps in strengthening interpersonal relationships	110	2.72	0.706	5
6	It promotes read and write web skills	110	2.15	0.572	2
7	It helps in developing an e-portfolio for future employment	110	2.9	0.976	6

Table 14 shows respondents opinion on the various benefits to use the social networking sites. Based on the mean and SD values, the benefits of usage ranked. It is inferred that SNS helps for their research and leaning rank first, promotion of reading and writing the web skills ranked second, increasing of virtual meeting with co research Scholars ranked third. Supporting collaborative and peer to-peer learning was ranked fourth, increases self-esteem and well being and helps in strengthening interpersonal relationships was ranked fifth. Developing an e-portfolio for future employment was ranked sixth.

Table No: 14

AVOVA between Age and using the SNS for Academic Purpose

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Online Learning	Between Groups	10.139	2	5.070	14.041	.000
	Within Groups	38.633	107	.361		
	Total	48.773	109			
Academic purposes such as group discussion and getting study partners online	Between Groups	58.085	2	29.042	140.401	.000
	Within Groups	22.133	107	.207		
	Total	80.218	109			

H₀: There no significance relationship between age and using the SNS for academic purpose

Table 14 shows the analysis of Variance between the age of the respondents and using the SNS for academic purposes. A low approximate significance value indicates that there is a relationship between the two variables. From the table it infers that the find out significance value is zero at the significant level of 0.05. The low values for the test statistics indicates that there is relationship between age of the respondents and using the SNS for academic purposes. So the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is being accepted. The alternative hypothesis is ***“There is a relationship between the age of the respondents and using the social networking sites for academic purposes”***

Table No: 15

AVOVA between Gender and using the SNS for entertainment purpose

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Finding friends from online	Between Groups	12.808	1	12.808	12.477	.001
	Within Groups	110.865	108	1.027		
	Total	123.673	109			
Social Networking Sites for watching movies	Between Groups	13.382	1	13.382	13.954	.000
	Within Groups	103.573	108	.959		
	Total	116.955	109			
SNS for communicating, mobilizing and organizing national issues profiles	Between Groups	4.364	1	4.364	10.579	.002
	Within Groups	44.554	108	.413		
	Total	48.918	109			

H₀: There association between gender and using the SNS for entertainment purpose

Table 15 shows the analysis of Variance between the gender of the respondents and using the SNS for entertainment purposes. A low approximate significance value indicates that there is a relationship between the two variables. From the table it infers that the find out significance value is zero and lesser than 0.05 at the significant level of 0.05. So the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is being accepted. The alternative hypothesis is ***“There is a association between gender and using the social networking sites for entertainment purposes”***

7. Results and Discussion

- ❖ The study indicates that six out of ten of the respondents was male and remaining four out of ten of the respondents was female. The study noticed that most of the respondents were single. It is clear that one out of two respondents was living in urban and four out of ten respondents were living in rural. The study indicated that six out of ten respondents were belongs to 31-35 age group and one fourth of the respondents were belongs to below 25 years
- ❖ The study pointed that majorities of the respondents were registering in SNS to maintain existing friends and their contacts and to find new friends and some of the respondents were registering for business related networks.
- ❖ Most of the respondents had more than 101 friends in their respective social network accounts. And one third of the respondents had 25-50 friends.
- ❖ Majorities of the respondents were accessing the SNS in their Home. Next to that more number of respondents was accessing the SNS in the Departments and their hostel premises. Majorities of the respondents were accessing the SNS in the Laptops and Smart Phones. Less numbers of respondents were using PC and tablets for access the SNS.
- ❖ One out of two respondents was using the SNS in daily and one fourth of them were using the SNS in twice in a week. One third of the respondents were spending less than one hour in the SNS. One out of ten of respondents were spending more than 3 hours in the SNS.
- ❖ Majorities of the respondents were using the SNS for communicating and interacting with their friends and more number of respondents was using the SNS for online learning and updating their profile information.
- ❖ A group of people using the SNS for communicating, mobilizing and organising national issues profiles and watch their professional activities. Some of respondents was using the SNS for academic purpose such as group discussion and getting study partners in online and connecting and interacting with business and academic partners. Lesser number of respondents were using the SNS for watching movies
- ❖ More number of respondents mentioned that SNS helps for their research and leaning, promotion of reading and writing the web skills, increasing of virtual meeting with co research Scholars. Some of the respondents mentioned that SNS help for supporting collaborative and peer to-peer learning, increases self-esteem and well being and helps in strengthening interpersonal relationships.
- ❖ There is a relationship between the age of the respondents and using the social networking sites for academic purposes

- ❖ There is a association between gender and using the social networking sites for entertainment purposes.

8. CONCLUSION

Social networking sites have been shown to foster social learning while engaging students in a complex array of communicative and creative endeavors including new literacy practices. The study reported in this paper examined the perceptions of students. Through an environmental scan about student of Periyar University engaged in using the SNS, we obtained better understanding of the user characteristics and practices on the social networking site.

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