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A STUDY OF PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

An exponential rise in usage of Social Networking Sites has been seen within the last few years. Their ease of use and instant gratification effect on users has altered the way people in general and students in particular spend their interval. Young grown-ups, particularly teens tend to be unaware of just how much time they actually spent on SNS. Negative compares of SNS practice include the shrinkage in real life social community participation and academic achievement, as well as relationship problems, each of which may be indicative of potential addiction. This study aims to get a deeper understanding of both problems and prospects of using social networking sites among the students and research scholars of Alagappa University, Karaikudi.

Keywords

Social medias, networking, internet based information's, social networking sites, problems and prospects, knowledge society

Introduction

In the beginning days, SNS was limited to fundamental outfits and websites used mainly by Professionals of technology and computer geeks. Over a period of time, SNS transformed into a behemoth that is changing the way how societies connect and converse with corporations, governments, traditional media, and each other. Without using any interactive means, through the traditional media, the individual used to share information or ideas about an organization. Such a communication was established mainly through one-to-one communication – either in person or on the phone; either through the mail or via e-mail.

For any media to be interactive, it needs to co-exist with some sort of communication techniques, for which social media is not an exception. In order to twirl communication into an interactive dialogue, the social media turns to be one of the most successful application of Sat mass Media (Suman K Kasturi, 2013:183) (a word coined Suman K Kasturi to indicate the mass

media that work in conjunction with the satellite communication). As of now, there is no single renowned definition of social media. However, of the many definitions that exists, it can be said that social media is the set of web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratization of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers. With the ability to achieve massive scalability in real time, the social media technologies allow people to connect with each other to produce or re-produce value through online conversation and collaboration (Peter R Scott & J. Mike Jacka, 2011:5).

Literature Search

Manzoor Hussain, Fayaz Ahmad Loan and Gousia Yaseen (2017) emphasis that, atudents at large have started to widely make use of social networking sites; however, few students have shown reservations due to lack of interest, lack of facility and priovacy concerns. Students who use social networking sites spend 1.43 hours as an average on SNS per day and mostly use SNS to gain knowledge and promote social, religious, and political and environment awareness; and few from passing time. The social networking sites used by the student are Facebook, Google+, You Tube and Twitter respectively.

According to American Marketing Association (2014), a brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. Since a brand is one of the most valuable intangible assets of every business, the success of companies largely depends on communicating brands with customers. Thus, brand communication is the process of bringing brands into contact with current and potential customers. And the objective of brand communication through social media, also known as social brand communication, has been to gain the traffic on company websites or attention toward a brand. Social brand communication instigates the Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Marketing through blogging or user-generated content sharing. The beauty of social brand communication is that people speaks for the brands. Therefore, global companies have recognized social brand communication as a potential tool for branding their products.

Key characteristics of SNS

- ❖ Free web space
- ❖ Unique web address
- ❖ Possibility of building profiles
- ❖ Virtual connections with friends and relatives

- ❖ Real time content uploads facility
- ❖ Feedback
- ❖ Time stamp

Pros and Cons of Social Networking

Pros: The SNS are further like the virtual meeting spaces where people can just chill and hang out with friends. They can discuss on diverse topics, share information, and exchange files and images. There are certain people who these sites as a platform to meet long lost friend and batch mates, whereas there are others for whom it becomes a connection to meet their future love. The professional people use this as a medium to increase their visibility, get noted, tell about their firm, service, and get more clients. By joining different communities, now people can easily know about the latest news related to that community. You can easily get the experts' advice on any task you may face related to their topic of interest. And the best portion of this is that the advice is free. Professionals are always ready to give their advice and share information. These are just some of the quite a few positive things that have contributed to make social networking truly popular among people and spread smiles.

Cons: SNS obviously helps in a lot of ways but the users have rally careful to stay secure and safe. Safety is one of the topmost concerns of SNS that you presently use. This is mainly because the social networking sites permit you to display your private info such as name, location, and email address. There are some people who always in search of a fake identify. If they acquire all the information about you on internet, they may use your identify for different kind of illegal undertakings, which may cause you problems in future. It is always advisable to don't provide your entire identify information online. You may get many requests for adding anyone as friend or joining different communities. At all times try to know as much as possible before adding anyone as friend or joining any community. Because they may use fake identify or may involve in some illegal activities, which any spoil your image.

Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to get acquaintance on the following with the help of a field study Problems and Prospects of Using Social Networking Sites by Students and Research Scholars of Alagappa University.

- i. To discuss the significance of social networking sites among the students and research scholars of Alagappa University;

- ii. To discuss the key features of social media;
- iii. To discuss the major roles played by social networking sites among Alagappa University Students and Scholars;
- iv. To assess the problems and prospects of social media;

Methodology

In this research study, survey method has been used to collect the data. The last two decades have witness a rapid transformation of traditional media into new media that encompasses digital, computerized, and networked information and communication technologies. The researcher distributed 190 questionnaires to the respondents and received only 170 among them. The problem under the study is PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY STUDENTS AND RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table – 1

Demographical details of the respondents

N = 170

S. No	Variables	Frequency	%
1.	Gender wise distribution		
	Male	36	21.2
	Female	134	78.8
2.	Course wise distribution		
	PG	91	53.5
	M.Phil	41	24.1
	PhD	38	22.4
3.	Department wise distribution		
	English	39	22.94
	Chemistry	22	12.94
	Tamil	15	8.82
	Library and Information Science	25	14.7
	Social Work	8	4.71

	History	12	7.06
	Commerce	31	18.24
	Maths	18	10.59
4.	Age wise distribution		
	Below 30	129	75.88
	31-40	33	19.42
	41 and above	8	4.7
5.	Respondents Domicile		
	Rural	77	45.2
	Urban	53	31.2
	Semi-urban	40	23.6

Gender plays a major role in this study. It is found from the above table that majority of the respondents (78.8%) were from female gender and rest (21%) of the respondents were male.

Statuses of the respondents are mentioned in the above table. It is noticed that 53.5% of the respondents were doing PG courses; 24% followed by 22% of the respondents were pursuing M.Phil and PhD research work.

There are many departments are functioning under the university. The researcher collects data from few departments. It is observed from the above table that 22.94% of the respondents were from the department of English, 18% are from commerce, 14.7% are in the department of Library and Information Science, 12.94% of the respondents are from chemistry department, 8.82% of the students and research scholars are Tamil department, 7% were from History and 4.71% are from the department of Social Work.

Age is one of the basic variables used to find out any difference exists between the ages and the problems and prospects of Social Networking Sites. It is observed from the above table that 75.88% of the respondents were in the age group of Below 30, 19% were between 31-40 ages and only 4.7% are in the age group of 41 and above.

Nativity-wise of the respondents were listed in the table 1. It is evident that 45% were from rural background, 31% were from urban areas and 23.6% were semi-urban.

Table – 2
Use of SNS per day

S.NO	Name of the sites	>3 Hrs	3-6 Hrs	<6 Hrs	Once in a week	Once in a month	Rarely	Never
i.	Facebook	54 (31.7%)	39 (22.9%)	30 (17.6%)	20 (11.7%)	3 (1.8%)	4 (2.4%)	20 (11.7%)
ii.	Tweeter	16 (9.4%)	15 (8.8%)	3 (1.8%)	90 (52.9%)	6 (3.5%)	36 (21.2%)	4 (2.3%)
iii.	WhatsApp	67 (39.4%)	16 (9.4%)	15 (8.8%)	10 (5.9%)	3 (1.8%)	41 (24.1%)	18 (10.6%)
iv.	Blogs	10 (5.8%)	3 (1.8%)	13 (7.6%)	6 (3.5%)	100 (58.8%)	26 (15.3%)	12 (7.1%)
v.	Google+	30 (17.6%)	21 (12.4%)	3 (1.8%)	62 (36.5%)	8 (4.7%)	35 (20.6%)	11 (6.4%)
vi.	LinkedIn	6 (3.5%)	10 (5.8%)	15 (8.8%)	25 (14.7%)	3 (1.8%)	7 (4.1%)	104 (61.2%)
vii.	Myspace	6 (3.5%)	6 (3.5%)	13 (7.6%)	23 (13.5%)	20 (11.7%)	7 (4.2%)	95 (55.8%)
Viii.	YouTube	60 (35.3%)	27 (15.9%)	17 (10%)	22 (12.9%)	7 (4.2%)	26 (15.3%)	11 (6.4%)

In order to find out that for how long respondents are using SNS and what are the sites they are using, the researcher has collected data according to and analysed in the above table. It is found from the above table that 31.7% of respondents are using face-book for less than 3 hours; 52.9% of using tweeter for once in a week; 39% are using whats-app for less than 3 hours; 58.8% of the respondents were using blogs for once in a month; 36.5% were using Google+ for once in a week; 61% were never used Linked-In; 55.8% of the respondents were not using MySpace; and 35% of the respondents are using you-tube for minimum of 3 hours per day.

Table – 3

Purpose of Using SNS

S.NO	Variables	Frequency	%
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I	For communication with friends & relative	99	58.24
ii)	For meeting with new friends	8	4.70
iii)	For searching/meeting people one might know	14	8.24
iv)	For Fun and entertainment	21	12.35
v)	For playing games	28	16.47
	Total	170	100%

It is noticed from the above table that 58% were stated that they are using SNS to communication with friends and relatives, 16% were using to play games, 12% were using SNS for fun and entertainment, 8% were using to search or to meet people one might know and 4.70% were using to meeting with new friends. So it is clearly shown that, each and every-one has some purpose to use of Social Networking Sites.

Table – 4
Prospects of SNS

N = 170

S. No	Features	SA	A	N	D	SD
i.	Sharing of information and other resources	41 (24.1%)	91 (53.5%)	21 (12.4%)	14 (8.2%)	3 (1.8%)
ii.	Mass communication	40 (23.5%)	80 (47.1%)	30 (17.6%)	10 (5.9%)	10 (5.9%)
iii.	Improvement of learning outcome	53 (31.2%)	97 (57.1%)	10 (5.8%)	3 (1.8%)	7 (4.1%)
iv.	Social learning	45 (26.5%)	65 (38.2%)	27 (15.9%)	8 (4.7%)	25 (14.7%)
v.	Development of independence	31 (18.2%)	69 (40.6%)	36 (21.2%)	26 (15.3%)	8 (4.7%)
vi.	Promotion of social message	14 (8.2%)	66 (38.3%)	51 (30%)	31 (18.2%)	8 (4.7%)
vii.	Group building	16 (9.4%)	75 (44.1%)	29 (17.1%)	25 (14.7%)	25 (14.7%)

viii.	Getting news about Employment/placement	58 (34.1%)	76 (44.7%)	25 (14.7%)	8 (4.7%)	3 (1.8%)
ix.	Being updated	64 (37.6%)	70 (41.1%)	15 (8.8%)	6 (3.5%)	15 (8.8%)
x.	Storing of educational & other resources	50 (29.4%)	78 (45.9%)	24 (14.1%)	8 (4.7%)	10 (5.9%)
xi.	Improving communication skills	59 (34.7%)	60 (35.3%)	24 (14.1%)	14 (8.2%)	13 (7.6%)
xii.	Improving computer skills	63 (37.1%)	66 (38.8%)	23 (13.5%)	10 (5.9%)	8 (4.7%)
xiii.	Sharing of learning outcome	39 (22.9%)	86 (50.5%)	30 (17.6%)	12 (7.1%)	3 (1.8%)
xiv.	Gaining confidence	46 (27.1%)	71 (41.8%)	33 (19.4%)	14 (8.2%)	6 (3.5%)

It is evident from the table – 4, 53.5% of the respondents were agreed with the statement that are sharing of information and other information from SNS, 47% of the respondents were agreed that its prospects is Mass Communication, 57% were agreed that it improvement of learning outcomes, 38.2% were for social learning, 40.6% agreed for development of independence, 38.3% of the respondents were agreed that SNS promotes Social messages, 44% were agreed to the statement of group building, 44.7% were using to get news about employment / placement, 41% were agreed that its being update our knowledge, 45.9% of the respondents were agreed that SNS is benefit to store educational and other resources, 35% and 34% were agreed and strongly agreed for, its improving communication skills, 50.5% of the respondents stated and agreed that it is benefit for sharing of learning outcomes and finally 41.8% were agreed for gaining confidence among themselves is the major prospects of using SNS.

Table – 5

Harmful effects and problems of SNS

N = 170

S. No	Effects/Problems	SA	A	N	D	SD
i.	Creation of false/fake profile	82	40	21	13	14

		(48.2%)	(23.5%)	(12.4%)	(7.6%)	(8.3%)
ii.	Offensive, threatening or hate content	53 (31.2%)	68 (40%)	35 (20.6%)	3 (1.8%)	11 (6.4%)
iii.	Indecent content (e.g. Sexually explicit, nudity, adult content etc.)	53 (31.2%)	55 (32.3%)	29 (17.1%)	3 (1.8%)	30 (17.6%)
iv.	Promotion of illegal or immoral conduct, behaviour or material	68 (40%)	56 (32.9%)	31 (18.2%)	4 (2.4%)	11 (6.5%)
v.	Wastage of time	56 (32.9%)	61 (35.9%)	35 (20.5%)	7 (4.1%)	11 (6.5%)
vi.	Programs to harvest email address, solicit or collect personal information	53 (31.2%)	71 (41.7%)	31 (18.2%)	4 (2.4%)	11 (6.5%)

It is found from the table – 5, 48% of the respondents were strongly agreed that creation of false and fake ID is the most harmful effects or problems in SNS, 40% of the respondents were agreed that the Offensive, threatening or hate content is the problem, 32% agreed for Indecent content (e.g. Sexually explicit, nudity, adult content etc.) is the major problem, 40% of them were strongly agreed that Promotion of illegal or immoral conduct, behaviour or material, 35.9% were agreed that SNS is waste of time and finally 41.7% of the respondents were agreed Programs to harvest email address, solicit or collect personal information.

Major Findings

- i. 78.8% were from female gender;
- ii. 53.5% of the respondents were doing PG courses;
- iii. 22.94% of the respondents were from the department of English;
- iv. 75.88% of respondents were in the age group of below 30;
- v. 45% of respondents were from rural background;
- vi. 31.7% of respondents are using face-book for less than 3 hours; 52.9% of them were using Twitter for once in a week; 39% of the respondents were using Whatsapp for about less than 3 hours; 58.8% of the Students and Research Scholars were using blogs for once

in a month; 36.5% of respondents were using Google+ for once in a week; 61% of the respondents were never used LinkedIn; 55.8% of them never used My Space; 35% of the respondents were using You Tube for about less than 3 hours.

- vii. 58% were stated that they are using SNS for communication;
- viii. 53.5% of the respondents were agreed with the statement that are sharing of information and other information from SNS;
- ix. 48% of the respondents were strongly agreed that creation of false and fake ID is the most harmful effects or problems in SNS;

Conclusion

SNS is a pleasant form of entertainment, great for meeting people with parallel interests, and can be a very effective business technique for entrepreneurs, writers, actors, musicians or artists. Most of us have hobbies, or things that we are deeply interested in such as books, television, video games or movies. Social networks permit us to reach out to others that have the same interests. Social media websites, such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, have become nearly inescapable facets of modern life, particularly for kids. A new report proposes they can have real benefits and risks for children. These sites and virtual gaming worlds, allow users to interact with each other and they are where children and adolescents are spending a lot, if not most, of their free time, according to a report on the impact of social media just released by the American Academy of Paediatrics. The report states that more than half of adolescents log on to a social media website at least once a day, and nearly one-quarter of teens say they log on to their desired social media sites 10 or more times each day. In the information society, in addition to technical skills and access to information technologies, it is becoming increasingly important for people to have diversified and supportive social contacts. Although resources and opportunities may be available, one may not necessarily be aware of their existence, or even have direct access to them. In those cases, knowing people from different contextual, grades of expertise, and social levels turns out to be vital.

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