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Social Media's Magnetism towards Researchers: Implications for Libraries

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Abstract

The study explored the spell of social media among M.Phil and PhD scholars of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Researchers' usage purposes of five social media were asked. Responses were analyzed quantitatively. Maximum (58%) respondents were highly familiar with social media. Facebook was at the top. Researchers strongly agreed that they use Facebook for interaction with friends, Twitter for enhancing social presence, Google + for identifying the popular topics, Linked In for getting job opportunities, and Blogger for getting fame. Libraries may step forward to attract researchers by providing services through social media. Libraries may inform their patrons through social networking sites about the new books, relevant journal articles, databases, websites, new admission and scholarship opportunities for higher education and research for faculty and students, information about seminars, conferences, workshops and other professional training opportunities which may be of their interest by advance personalized services.

Introduction

Social media is a medium of interaction (Downes, 2005, p. 411). Social media is a well-established phenomenon that has continued to grow and develop since the inception of the Internet and it connects people with each other (Bejune & Ronan, 2008, p. 11). Huang, Hood and Yoo (2013) stated that gender difference is significantly effect on the usage of internet and Web 2.0 applications. Females more frequently use Web 2.0 applications than males (p. 57).

Subrahmanyam, Riech, Waechter, and Espinozia (2008) explored that Internet users prefer Internet and especially social media websites for communicating with their friends and family members (p. 432). Hasim and Salman (2010) explored that in Malaysia, use of social networks is common. It has very affirmative effects on users (p. 309). Steiner (2009) stated that social software allows the users to tag a resource. Libraries use this new trend to keep in contact with the students (p. 4).

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the familiarity of Social media among M.Phil and PhD scholars.

2. To know the usage frequency of the given social media websites.

3. To assess the usage purposes of social media among research scholars.

4. To find the implication for libraries keeping in view the users' trends toward social media.

Research Methodology

The researcher used survey method for this study. Two public sector universities of South Punjab, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Bahauddin Zakariya Multan were surveyed.

Research scholars of M.Phil and PhD from the five faculties of each university, were selected as a whole population. Convenient sampling method was used and survey was conducted through questionnaires. Close ended questions were asked by the Respondents. Researcher got response from 871 research scholars. Five point Lickert scale was used for acquiring the results. The researcher personally visited all the faculties to get frequent and fruitful response. Collected data were analyzed through quantitative research method in SPSS 20.

Review of the Related Literature

According to Topper (2007), 55% users use online social networking sites mostly MySpace or Facebook. Out of these teens, 66% say that their profile is invisible to other users and 91% give the reason that they wants to interact with friends, 82% use the sites to contact with those seen less frequently and the interesting thing is that 17% users use these sites only for flirt. While Madhusudhan (2012) examined that the researchers prefer Facebook and ResearchGate for the research and educational purposes. In spite of various advantages of SNSs it is mentioned by the respondents that the use of social media is just wastage of time (p. 100). Vrocharidou and Efthymiou (2011) examined that university students adopt instant messaging, E-mails and Social networking sites frequently. The students use these computer mediated communication applications fulfillment of their social and educational requirements (p.609). Lwago (2012) explored that respondents have much more passion towards e-learning and Web 2.0 technologies. Higher education institutes should take step to promote e-learning and increase awareness of these technologies for positive and effective use. Universities have to focus on the curriculum development programs (p. 103). Ayu and Abrizah (2011) explored that most of the libraries are using social networking site like Facebook for their advertisement and marketing of their services (p.239).

Nicholas, Watkinson, Rowlands, and Jubb (2011) explored that Facebook and Twitter is frequently used by the university users of UK. Social media is very effective for library marketing. But the researchers founded that many libraries are not connecting with the social media. If connected then they have less understanding about marketing plan (p. 375). Burton (2008) pointed out that now libraries want to create networking into their services, so that users can interact with each other on the topics of their interest. Steiner (2009) stated that social software allows the users to tag a resource. Libraries use this new trend to keep in contact with the students (p. 4). According to Khan and Bhatti (2012), in Pakistan social media is positively adopted. The motive of using social media is to market the resources and services of libraries for their users/readers Libraries should take advantage for their development and in provided as much as facilities to library users. The researchers suggested that libraries have to use social media for marketing what they have. Today the most popular and interesting social network is the Facebook.com. as, Raskin (2006) mentioned that in campuses 80-90% students check their Facebook profiles on daily bases (p. 56). Dogan, Bilgic, Duman, and Seferoglu (2012) found that students have awareness of web 2.0 tools. Usage of Internet has changed according to the needs of students. They prefer to use Facebook than MSN. They examined that students mostly use Internet for fun and connecting with friends Libraries can play a vital role to attract the users by providing information to them through social networks (p. 550).

Data Analysis

Respondents' Gender

In total, 871 respondents responded against the questionnaire, of which 402 (46%) were males and 469 (54%) were females.

Respondents' Age

The data show that of the 871 respondents, 149 (17.1%) were at the age limit of (21-25), 566 (65.0%) were aged 26-30, 114 (13.1%) were 31-35, and only 42 (4.8%) were at the age of (36-above).

Respondents' Institution

Of the 871 respondents, 421 (48.3%) were from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) and 450 (51.7%) from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan (BZU).

Respondents' Study Program

Results show that 756 (87%) respondents were M. Phil and 115 (13%) Ph. D.

Faculties of the Respondents in IUB

Frequency distribution of the faculties of respondents in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur is presented in Table 1, shows that 125 (30%) were from faculty of Arts, 136 (32.2%) from faculty of Science, 93 (22%) from Faculty of Islamic Learning, 47 (11.1%) from faculty of Education, and 20 (4.7%) from faculty of Management Sciences.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Faculties of Respondents in IUB

Sr.	Names of Faculties	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Faculty of Arts	125	30.0
2.	Faculty of Science	136	32.2
3.	Faculty of Islamic Learning	93	22.0
4.	Faculty of Education	47	11.1
5.	Faculty of Management Sciences	20	4.7
	Total	421	100

Faculties of the Respondents in BZU

Frequency distribution of the faculties of respondents in the Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan is presented in Table 2, shows that 173 (38.4%) were from faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 134 (29.8%) from faculty of Science, 71 (15.8%) from Faculty of Islamic Studies and Languages, 36 (8%) from faculty of Agriculture Science and Technology, and 36 (8%) from faculty of Commerce, Law and Business Administration.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Faculties of Respondents in BZU

Sr.	Names of Faculties	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	173	38.4
2.	Faculty of Science	134	29.8
3.	Faculty of Islamic Studies and Languages	71	15.8
4.	Faculty of Agriculture Science and Technology	36	8.00
5.	Faculty of Commerce, Law and Business Administration	36	8.00
	Total	450	100

Familiarity with Social Media

Frequency distribution about the familiarity with social media among respondents is presented in Table 3. Of the 871 respondents, 505 (58.0%) responded to "Yes", while 59 (6.8%) responded to "No". On the other hand, 307 (35.2%) respondents were familiar with social media "to some extent".

Table 3. Frequency Distribution About the Familiarity with Social Media Among Respondents

Sr.	*Familiarity with Social Media*	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	505	58.0
2.	To some extent	307	35.2

3.	No	59	6.8
	Total	871	100

Usage of Social Media

The results show that most of the respondents always use Facebook (mean = 4.94). Respondents frequently use Google + (mean = 4.32). They sometimes use Linked In and Twitter (mean values are 3.42, 3.31 respectively). On the other hand they rarely use Blogger (mean = 2.22) (Table 4).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage of Social Media Websites

Sr.	Social Media Websites	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.
1.	Facebook	4.94	5.00	5	.341
2.	Google +	4.32	4.00	4	.647
3.	Linked In	3.42	3.00	3	.986
4.	Twitter	3.31	4.00	4	1.409
5.	Blogger	2.22	2.00	2	1.033

Note: 5 = Always, 4 = Frequently, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, 1 = Never

Usage Purposes of Social Media

A list of 5 top ranked social media websites was provided with their purposes regarding to learning, education and research. Respondents were asked about the usage purposes of the mentioned social media websites.

Usage Purposes of Facebook

Of the 871 respondents, most of the respondents agreed with the following purposes of Facebook: "interaction with friends", "sharing desired ideas & information", "exposure to new

ideas" (mean values are 4.19, 3.91, 3.80 respectively). On the other hand respondents gave no opinion that "one-stop shop" and "connecting with teachers/supervisors" (mean values are 3.38, 3.11 respectively) are the main purposes of using Facebook (Table 5).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage Purposes of Facebook

Sr.	Usage Purposes of Facebook	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.
1.	Interaction with friends	4.19	4.00	4	.451
2.	Sharing desired ideas & information	3.91	4.00	4	.731
3.	Exposure to new ideas	3.80	4.00	4	1.074
4.	One-Stop shop	3.38	4.00	4	1.031
5.	Connecting with teachers/supervisors	3.11	3.00	3	.887

Note: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No opinion, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Usage Purposes of Twitter

Of the 871 respondents, most of the respondents agreed with the following purposes of Twitter: "enhancing social presence" "connecting with fellows", "getting valuable comments", "interacting with teachers" (mean values are 4.01, 3.90, 3.79, 3.58 respectively). On the other hand respondents gave no opinion about "using as a data collection tool" (mean = 3.44 respectively) are the main purposes of using Twitter (Table 6).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage Purposes of Twitter

Sr.	Usage Purposes of Twitter	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.
1.	Enhancing social presence	4.01	4.00	5	.906
2.	Connecting with fellows	3.90	4.00	4	.847
3.	Getting valuable comments	3.79	4.00	4	.694
4.	Interacting with teachers	3.58	4.00	4	.675

| 5. | Using as a data collection tool | 3.44 | 3.00 | 3 | .598 |

Note: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No opinion, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Usage Purposes of Google +

Of the 871 respondents, most of the respondents strongly agreed with the following purpose of Google +: "identifying popular topics" (mean = 4.74). Respondents were agreed with "creating communities" and "for marketing" (mean values are 3.71, 3.56 respectively). On the other hand respondents gave no opinion that "gaining more followers" and "discovering new contents" (mean values are 3.43, 3.25 respectively) are the main purposes of using Google + (Table 7).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage Purposes of Google +

Sr.	Usage Purposes of Google +	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.
1.	Identifying popular topics	4.74	5.00	5	.501
2.	Creating communities	3.71	4.00	4	.757
3.	For marketing	3.56	4.00	4	.728
4.	Gaining more followers	3.43	3.00	3	.552
5.	Discovering new contents	3.25	3.00	3	.664

Note: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No opinion, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Usage Purposes of Linked In

Of the 871 respondents, most of the respondents agreed with the following purposes of Linked In: "opportunity for international jobs", "exposure related to education", "connecting with other students of same field", "helpful to get recommendations", "(mean values are 3.82, 3.70, 3.61, and 3.59 respectively). On the other hand respondents gave no opinion that "connecting with professionals" (mean = 3.42) is the main purposes of using Linked In (Table 8).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage Purposes of Linked In

Sr.	Usage Purposes of Linked In	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.
1.	Opportunity for international jobs	3.82	4.00	4	.725
2.	Exposure related to education	3.70	4.00	4	.575
3.	Connecting with other students of same field	3.61	4.00	4	.607
4.	Helpful to get recommendations	3.59	4.00	4	.574
5.	Connecting with professionals	3.42	3.00	3	.565

Note: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No opinion, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Usage Purposes of Blogger

Of the 871 respondents, most of the respondents agreed with the following purposes of Blogger: "getting fame", "aggregating research work", "real-time discussion" (mean values are 3.79, 3.60, 3.54 respectively). On the other hand respondents gave no opinion about "source of inspiration" and "reliable hosting" (mean values are 3.45, 3.34 respectively) (Table 9).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents' Usage Purposes of Blogger

Sr.	Usage Purposes of Blogger	Mean	Median	Mode	St. D.

1.	Getting fame	3.79	4.00	4	.931
2.	Aggregating research work	3.60	4.00	3	.878
3.	Real-time discussion	3.54	4.00	3	.811
4.	Source of inspiration	3.45	3.00	3	.773
5.	Reliable hosting	3.34	3.00	3	.735

Note: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = No opinion, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Main Findings of the Study

1. Findings show that maximum (54%) respondents were females.

2. Of the 871 respondents, 566 (65.0%) were aged from 26 to30.

3. Results revealed that (87%) respondents were M. Phil and 115 (13%) were Ph. D.

4. Maximum, (58%) research scholars were highly familiar with social media.

5. Majority of the respondents always use Facebook.

6. Google + is also frequently used by the research scholars.

7. They agreed that their usage purposes of Facebook were interaction with friends, sharing the desired ideas & information and to get exposure to new ideas.

8. Research scholars were agreed that they use Twitter for enhancing social presence, connecting with fellows, getting valuable comments, and interacting with teachers.

9. They strongly agreed that they use Google + for identifying the popular topics.

10. They use Linked In to get opportunity for international jobs, exposure related to education, connecting with other students of same field, helpful to get recommendations.

11. They agreed that they use Blogger for getting fame, aggregating research work and for real-time discussion.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Researchers were mostly familiar social media and also the usage of social media websites is high among them. (Khan and Bhatti, 2012, p. 21; Hasim and Salman, 2010, p. 309; Vrocharidou and Efthymiou, 2012, p. 615; Topper, 2007, p. 378; Kane, Robinson-Combre, & Berge, 2010, p. 62; Dogan, Bilgic, Duman, and Seferoglu, 2012, 550). The mentioned studies have the same results.

Most of the respondents always use Facebook. This finding correlates with the findings by (Ayu and Abrizah, 2011; Topper, 2007). Nicholas, Watkinson, Rowlands, and Jubb (2011) reported that the researchers sometimes use Twitter, the current study also have the same results.

Libraries are the resource centers that deal with the accuracy and currency of information given to the patrons. As social media has a magnetic attraction that inspires the researchers, so it is highly recommended that Libraries should facilitate the researchers through social media. Burton (2008); Khan and Bhatti (2012) also recommended the same. LIS professionals should take initiatives to inform their patrons through social networking sites about the new books, relevant journal articles, databases, websites, new admission and scholarship opportunities for higher education and research for faculty and students. Library may disseminate information about relevant seminars, conferences, workshops and other professional training opportunities which may be of their interest by advance personalized services.

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