

Perception and Use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the Postgraduate Students: A Study of University of Mysore

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Abstract - The present study is an attempt to examine the perception and use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the postgraduate students of the University of Mysore. The Prime objective of the study is to assess the use of most popular SNSs, purpose of use of SNSs, most employed tool for accessing SNSs, awareness level regarding security concerns and problems faced by the respondents while accessing the SNSs. The questionnaire method was used for data collection. A total of 110 questionnaires distributed to the postgraduate students of 21 departments and 102 filled-in questionnaires were received back with the overall response rate of 92.72%. The findings of the study shows that the majority of respondents 64(62.75%) are Female. The 'Google+', 'YouTube' and Facebook are most preferred SNSs by the highest number of respondents representing mean value 3.21, 3.08 and 2.93 respectively. About 69.61% the respondents use the SNS for the purposes of the 'academic'. 88.24% respondents use Mobile as prime tool for using SNSs. 30 (29.41%) respondents have more than 3 years of experience in using the SNSs and 37(36.27%) spend 1 to 3 hours per day for using SNSs. Friends searching or adding' is the most useful function of the SNSs. The highest number of respondents has personal friends on SNSs and permits their friends to view their profile information. 77(75.49%) respondents were engaged in other activities like internet browsing and searching while accessing the SNSs. The majority of respondents secure their accounts by avoiding friend requests from unfamiliar persons. 73(71.57%) respondents accepted that the use of SNSs effectively helping in studies and learning and lack of time is major hurdle for accessing the SNSs.

Keywords: Internet, World Wide Web, Social Networking Sites, Social Media, web 2.0

Introduction:

The expansion of information & communication technology and World Wide Web (WWW) has highly influenced on communication of the people in digital world. Social networking sites (SNSs) are the virtual space among people who mutually share information and use it as an effective means of communication. It is a relationship between people who belong to different religions as well as regions, but with similar objectives. The SNSs are the new avatar of e-communication to the mass people for the two-way communication of exchange, interactions and sharing all kinds of information seamlessly (Singh & Gill, 2015). The SNSs have specialized resources and services like chatting, blogging, sharing photos, videos & audios etc that fulfill the needs of the diversified user. SNSs are recognized as being one of the most famous emerging technologies and should be used as a teaching and learning tool to help students and teachers to achieve higher levels of success in and out of the classroom. Academia should be committed to supporting this use and to insert new and suitable technologies into the process of both learning and teaching as a core part of its learning and teaching strategies (Mansour, 2015). Therefore the present study conducted to explicitly understand perception and use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the postgraduate students of the University of Mysore. It has also includes aspects which are faced by the students with accessing these sites.

Review of Literature:

The literature review of the study shows that there are some studies have been done on the perception and use of social networking sites by students. Singh & Gill (2015) conducted a study on the role and users' approach to social networking sites in Universities of North India. The study result found that the majority of respondents have the awareness on making use of SNSs application in their academic affairs and the mainly used the application for the purposes of 'entertainment', 'communication with family & friend', and 'find the useful information. They also revealed that even if they had awareness about the security aspects of SNSs, they had fear of misusing personal information was major hurdles in the accessing the SNSs. The study made by Haneefa & Sumitha (2011) also indicates the friendly communication and academic communication were a major criterion of the students for using the SNSs and the 'sending scraps' and 'meeting new friends' were a most frequently used facilities and services available in the SNSs. The students opined that the lack of security and privacy were prime concerns of the SNSs. Adithyakumari et al. (2013) investigated the perception and use of the SNSs among dental students of Forooqia Dental college. The result found that the students involved in using the diverse academic SNSs including Wikipedia, WebDental and Scispace for the educational purposes. They also frequently used general SNSs consisting Facebook, YouTube and Google+ for the purposes of finding the information and interacting with the friends. The important reasons for using the SNSs by the people in Norway were to get in contact with new people, to keep in touch with their friends and for general socializing (Brandtzæg and Heim 2009). Miller, Parsons and Lifer (2010) examined the appropriateness of the content that they post in the SNSs and result shows that students routinely post content that they realise is not appropriate for all audiences, especially potential employers. Luo (2010) conducted exploratory study of students' peer socializing in online LIS program and identified that social networking websites are the

second popular venue of students' peer socializing and are considered a productive channel for establishing social networks among students. The faculty member of the School of Library and Information Science in Kuwait accessed SNSs several times a week such as Youtube, Twitter, Facebook and Blogs which were mainly used for the purpose of the communication and sharing the information. They used the SNSs more for the social engagement rather than for institutional and educational purposes. However, there was a statistically significant relation between the faculty's area of teaching and their use of SNSs (Mansour, 2015).

Objectives:

The Present study has been carried out with the following objectives.

1. To find out the most popular SNSs used by the postgraduate students.
2. To investigate the purpose of use of the SNSs by the postgraduate students.
3. To know the most employed tool for accessing.
4. To identify the most useful functions of SNSs used by the postgraduate students.
5. To identify what are the engagements while accessing these sites
6. To recognize the awareness level regarding security concerns.
7. To find out the problems faced by students while using SNSs

Methodology:

The main aim of the study is to examine perception and use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) of the postgraduate students in the University of Mysore. Survey research method is used for the data collection. The sample was drawn from the 21 departments that belong to three faculties of the university such as Arts, Social Science and Science. The structured questionnaire with five point Likert scale was designed for data collection and distributed 110 questionnaires to the postgraduate students and 102 filled-in questionnaires were received back. This constituted overall response rate of 92.72%. The Microsoft Excel was employed for analysis of the data and, average and mean score were applied for interpretation of the table in the study. The data so collected has been analyzed and interpreted in the succeeding sections of the paper.

Data Analysis:

1. Gender v/s Age

Table 1: Age vs. Gender Cross Tabulation

S/N	Age Group	Gender		Respondents	Percentage
		Male	Female		
1	20 – 22 Years	14	60	74	72.55
2	23 – 25 Years	21	04	25	24.51
3	26 – 30 Years	03	00	03	2.94
	Total	38 (37.25%)	64 (62.75%)	102	100.00

The Age vs. Gender cross tabulation is shown in the Table 1. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 64 (62.75%) are Female and the rest respondents 38 (37.25%) are Male. It may be also seen from the table that highest number of the male respondents (35) belong to age group of 20 – 25 years and the highest number of the female respondents (60) belong to age group of 20 – 22. The table clearly shows that the female respondents are more youngster as compare to male respondents.

2. Use of Social Networking Sites

The use of Social Networking Sites by the respondents is shown in the Table 2. It may be seen from the table that the respondents are engaged in using of various kinds of the SNSs for fulfill diverse interests. The ‘Google+’, ‘YouTube’ and Facebook are most preferred SNSs by the highest number of respondents representing mean value 3.21, 3.08 and 2.93 respectively. The next most used SNSs are Slideshare (mean = 1.97), ‘Twitter’ (mean=1.75) ‘Widows live’ (mean=1.58), ‘Flickr’ (mean=1.52), and ‘LinkedIn’ (mean=1.50). The remaining SNSs such as ‘Hi5’ (mean=1.48), ‘MySpace’ (mean=1.43), ‘Orkut’ (mean=1.39) and ‘Friendster’ (mean=1.38) are used by very least number of the respondents. It may be clearly shown in the table that the respondents used mostly the old as well as newly introduced SNSs.

Table 2: Use of Social Networking Sites

S/N	SNSs	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Most Frequently	Mean
1	Google+	19 (18.6%)	16 (15.7%)	17 (16.7%)	25 (24.5%)	25 (24.5%)	3.21 (1)
2	YouTube	20 (19.6%)	15 (14.7%)	24 (23.5%)	23 (22.5%)	20 (19.6%)	3.08 (2)
3	Facebook	25 (24.5%)	19 (18.6%)	20 (19.6%)	14 (13.7%)	24 (23.5%)	2.93 (3)
4	Slideshare	59 (57.8%)	13 (12.7%)	12 (11.8%)	10 (9.8%)	8 (7.8%)	1.97 (5)
5	Twitter	64 (62.7%)	17 (16.7%)	10 (9.8%)	5 (4.9%)	6 (5.9%)	1.75 (4)
6	Window Live	76 (74.5%)	8 (7.8%)	5 (4.9%)	11 (10.8%)	2 (2%)	1.58 (6)
7	Flickr	80 (78.4%)	6 (5.9%)	5 (4.9%)	7 (6.9%)	4 (3.9%)	1.52 (7)
8	LinkedIn	79 (77.5%)	8 (7.8%)	8 (7.8%)	1 (1%)	6 (5.9%)	1.50 (12)
9	Hi5	80 (78.4%)	8 (7.8%)	5 (4.9%)	5 (4.9%)	4 (3.9%)	1.48 (8)

10	MySpace	79 (77.5%)	11 (10.8%)	6 (5.9%)	3 (2.9%)	3 (2.9%)	1.43 (9)
12	Orkut	81 (79.4%)	9 (8.8%)	6 (5.9%)	5 (4.9%)	1 (1%)	1.39 (10)
13	Friendster	81 (79.4%)	12 (11.8%)	3 (2.9%)	3 (2.9%)	3 (2.9%)	1.38 (11)

3. Purposes of Use of SNSs

The purpose of use of Social Networking Sites by the respondents is shown in the Table 3. It may be seen from the table that about 60% of the respondents use the SNS for the purposes of the ‘academic’ (69.61%), ‘entertainment’ (66.67%) and ‘find useful information’ (59.80%). The ‘sharing experience’, ‘communicate with family & friends’ and ‘Socializing’ are next preferred purposes of the respondents which represent 54.90%, 53.92% and 50.00% respectively, followed by ‘To discuss social issues & events’ (47.06%), ‘Keep up-to-date knowledge’ (43.14%), ‘Discussion’ (43.14), ‘To help in finding facts for learning’ (42.16%), ‘I use it when I’m bored’ (33.33%), ‘Promote themselves and their work’ (32.35%), ‘Convenient than email/phone’ (31.37%). The least number of the respondents uses the SNSs for the purposes of ‘Keep informed of new product reviews that interest me’ (26.47%), ‘Playing games’ (23.53), ‘Get opinion’ (19.61%). It may be clearly seen from the table that the majority of respondents almost equally use the SNSs for the purposes of academic as well as general.

Table 3: Purposes of Use of SNSs

S/N	Purposes of Use of SNSs	Frequency	Percentage
1	Academic	71	69.61
2	Entertainment	68	66.67
3	Find useful information	61	59.80
4	Sharing experience	56	54.90
5	Communicate with family and friends	55	53.92
6	Socializing	51	50.00
7	To discuss social issues and events	48	47.06
8	Keep up-to-date knowledge	44	43.14
9	Discussion	44	43.14
10	To help in finding facts for learning	43	42.16
11	I use it when I’m bored	34	33.33
12	Promote themselves and their work	33	32.35
13	Convenient than email/phone	32	31.37
14	Keep informed of new product reviews that interest me	27	26.47
15	Playing games	24	23.53
16	Get opinions	20	19.61

4. Tools for using SNSs

The Table 4 indicates the tools that are used for accessing Social Networking Sites by the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 90(88.24%) use Mobile as prime tool for using SNSs followed by ‘Laptop’ 53(51.96%) and ‘Personal Computer’ 36 (35.29%). The least number of the respondents preferred ‘Tablet’ 9(8.82%) and ‘iPod’ 8(7.84%).

Table 4: Tools for using SNSs

S/N	Tools for using SNSs	Frequency	Percentage
1	Mobile	90	88.24
2	Laptop	53	51.96
3	Personal Computer	36	35.29
4	Tablet	9	8.82
5	iPod	8	7.84

5. Sources to know the use of SNSs

The Table 5 reveals the sources that are used for knowing the use of Social Networking Sites by the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents have taken the guidance from friends 60(58.82%) and referring the Newspapers and Magazines 42(41.18%) for knowing the use of SNSs. ‘Trial and errors’ 40(39.22%) and ‘Digital media’ 39(38.24%) are next preferred sources consulted by the respondents followed by ‘Guidance from teachers’ 31(30.39%) and ‘Through colleagues’ 24(23.53%). The very less number of the respondents 16(15.69%) have opined that they know the use of SNSs through the information literacy programmes.

Table 5: Sources to know the use of SNSs

S/N	Sources	Frequency	Percentage
1	Guidance from friends	60	58.82
2	Newspapers and magazines	42	41.18
3	Trial and errors	40	39.22
4	Digital media	39	38.24
5	Guidance from teachers	31	30.39
6	Through colleagues	24	23.53
7	Through information literacy programmes	16	15.69

6. Experience of Use of SNSs

Table 6: Experience of Use of SNSs

S/N	Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than a month	19	18.63
2	1- 6 months	17	16.67
3	6 months to 1 year	7	6.86
4	1 - 2 years	15	14.71
5	2 - 3 years	14	13.73
6	>3 years	30	29.41
	Total	102	100.00

The Table 6 indicates the experience of use of Social Networking Sites by the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 30 (29.41%) have more than 3 years of experience in using the SNSs followed by 19 (18.63%) respondents have less than a month experience, 17 (16.67%) respondents have 1 – 6 years, 15 (14.71%) respondents have 1 – 2 years, 14 (13.73%) respondents have 2 – 3 years and the remaining 7 (6.86%) respondents have 6 months to 1 year of the experience.

7. Time spent on use of SNSs

The Table 7 reveals that the time spent by the respondents for using the Social Networking Sites per day. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 37(36.27%) spend 1 to 3 hours for using SNSs per day followed by 34(33.33%) spend less than 1 hour, 11(10.78%) spend 3 to 5 hours, 4(3.92%) spend 5 to 7 hours and 2(1.96%) spend greater 7 hours. 14(13.73%) of the respondents not regularly spend for using SNSs.

Table 7: Time spent on use of SNSs

S/N	Time spent on use of SNSs	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than 1 hour	34	33.33
2	1-3 hours	37	36.27
3	3-5 hours	11	10.78
4	5-7 hours	4	3.92
5	>7 hours	2	1.96
6	Not regularly	14	13.73
	Total	102	100.00

8. Access Point to SNSs

Table 8: Access Point to SNSs

S/N	Access Point	Frequency	Percentage
1	Library	56	54.90
2	Home	50	49.02
3	Computer centre	37	36.27
4	Hostel	31	30.39
5	Cyber cafe	24	23.53
6	Department laboratory	15	14.71

The Table 8 depicts that the access point to use Social Networking Sites by the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 56(54.90%) access the SNSs at library. the second preferred access point is to use SNSs at home which represent 50(49.02%) followed by ‘Computer centre’ 37(36.27%), ‘Hostel’ 31(30.39%), ‘Cyber café’ 24(23.53%) and ‘Department laboratory’ 15(14.71%).

9. Useful functions of SNSs

The Table 9 reveals that most useful functions preferred by the respondents in the Social Networking Sites (SNSs). It may be seen from the table that more than half of the total respondents considered ‘Friends searching or adding’ 56(54.90%), ‘Chatting’ 53(51.96%), ‘Downloading applications’ 51(50.00%), ‘Photo or video sharing’ 50(49.02%) are the most useful functions of SNSs. ‘Message post’ is next preferred useful functions of the respondents which represents 39(38.24%) followed by ‘Profiles surfing’ 34(33.33%), ‘Games’ 33(32.35%), Advertisement’31(30.39%), ‘Events creating or joining’ 29(28.43%), and ‘Group searching’ 28(27.45%) and ‘Tagging’ 13(12.75%). ‘Appearance and Layout’ 7(6.86%) are very least used functions of the SNS by the respondents.

Table 9: Useful functions of SNSs

S/N	Functions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Friends searching / adding	56	54.90
2	Chatting	53	51.96
3	Download applications	51	50.00
4	Photo / video sharing	50	49.02
5	Message post	39	38.24
6	Profile surfing (Searchable)	34	33.33
7	Games	33	32.35
8	Advertisement	31	30.39
9	Events creating / joining	29	28.43
10	Group searching / joining	28	27.45
11	Tagging	13	12.75
12	Appearance and layout	7	6.86

10. Friendship Nature or Circle in SNSs

Table 10: Friendship Nature or Circle in SNSs

S/N	Friendship Nature	Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal friends	72	70.59
2	Family	58	56.86
3	Colleagues	48	47.06
4	Strangers	14	13.73

The Table 10 indicates that friendship nature of the respondents on SNSs. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 72(70.59%) have personal friends on SNSs followed by ‘Family’ 58(56.86%), ‘Colleague’ 48(47.06%) and ‘Strangers’ 14(13.73%).

11. Profile Visibility on SNSs

Table 11: Profile Visibility on SNSs

S/N	Profile Visibility	Frequency	Percentage
1	Friends	78	76.47
2	Customized	9	8.82
3	Anyone	8	7.84
4	Don’t know	7	6.86
	Total	102	100.00

The Table 11 shows the profile visibility of the respondents on their account on SNSs. It may be seen from the table that the highest number of respondents 78(76.47%) permits their friends to view their profile information on the account followed by ‘Customized’ 9(8.82%), ‘Anyone’ 8(7.84%), and ‘Don’tknow’ 7(6.86%).

12. User Engagements for Accessing of SNSs

Table 12: User Engagements for Accessing of SNSs

S/N	User Engagements	Frequency	Percentage
1	Internet browsing and searching	77	75.49
2	Listening to music	48	47.06
3	Mobile conversation	40	39.22
4	Preparing assignments	35	34.31
5	Watch television	27	26.47
6	Play games	18	17.65

Engagements of the respondents in other activities while accessing of SNSs is shown in the Table 12. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 77(75.49%) were engaged in Internet browsing and searching while accessing the SNSs followed by ‘Listening to Music’ 48(47.06%), ‘Mobile conversation’ 40(39.22%), Preparing assignments 35(34.31%), ‘Watch television’ 27(26.47%) and ‘Play games’ 18(17.65%).

13. SNSs Influences on Academic Proficiency

Table 12: SNSs Influences on Academic Proficiency

S/N	Academic Proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
1	Helping in studies and learning	73	71.57
2	To communicate with others	52	50.98
3	To develop new IT skills	35	34.31
4	Provide an interactive forum	28	27.45
5	For sharing and solving problem online	36	35.29

The Table 13 reveals that the influences of SNSs on academic proficiency of the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the majority of respondents 73(71.57%) accepted that the use of SNSs effectively helping in studies and learning followed by ‘To communicate with others’ 52(50.98%), ‘To develop new IT skills’ 35(34.31%), ‘Provide an interactive forum’ 28(27.45%) and ‘For sharing and solving problem online’ 36(35.29%).

14. Security Awareness about SNSs

Table 14: Security Awareness about SNSs

S/N	Security Concerns	Frequency	Percentage
1	Avoid friend requests from unfamiliar persons	71	69.61
2	Block unwanted friends	59	57.84
3	Avoid fake accounts	55	53.92
4	Virus detection	49	48.04

The Table 14 indicates the awareness regarding security aspect while accessing the SNSs by the respondents. It may be seen from the table that the highest number of respondents 71(69.61%) secure their accounts by avoiding friend requests from unfamiliar persons followed by ‘Block unwanted friends’ 59(57.84%), ‘Avoid face accounts’ 55(53.92%) and ‘Virus detection’ 49(48.04%).

15. Problems Faced While Accessing SNSs**Table 15: Problems Faced While Accessing SNSs**

S/N	Nature of Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of Time	43	42.16
2	Lack of computer literacy	23	22.55
3	Inadequate Internet facility	32	31.37
4	Lack of security and privacy	30	29.41
5	Lack of academic/research information	29	28.43
6	Access not allowed by university / Institution	29	28.43

The problems faced by the respondents while accessing the SNSs is shown in the Table 15. It may be seen from the table that the highest number of respondents 43(42.16) stated that lack of time is major hurdle for accessing the SNSs followed by 'Lack of computer literacy' 23(22.55%), 'Inadequate Internet facility 32(31.37%) and 'Lack of security and privacy' 30(29.41%). The least problems are 'Lack of academic or research information' and 'Access not allowed by university or institution' which represent 29(28.43%) each.

Conclusion:

The present study is carried out to examine the perception and use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the postgraduate students in the University of Mysore. The findings of the study shows that the majority of respondents are Female. The 'Google+', 'YouTube' and Facebook are most preferred SNSs by the highest number of respondents. Friends searching or adding' is the most useful function of the SNSs. The highest number of respondents has personal friends on SNSs and permits their friends to view their profile information. The majority of respondents secure their accounts by avoiding friend requests from unfamiliar persons and they accepted that the use of SNSs effectively helping in studies, and learning and lack of time is major hurdle for accessing the SNSs. The respondents need training and awareness programmes for using effectively various resources and services available on SNSs and SNSs companies should have to improve the security and privacy strategies of their sites for protecting personal information of the user.

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