STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine students' perceptions about Social Networking sites, usage of technologies and awareness of Social Networking sites in Education. The population of the study were 1500 students of the U.G and P.G students of selected colleges in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The sample consists of 1500 students from U.G and P.G students of selected colleges in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh .Data had been analyzed using quantitative data analysis method, which were mean, percentage and Independent-sample T-test. The findings revealed that students satisfaction of using social networking sites was a moderator positive level (mean = 3.37) .Students agreed on using social networking with E-Safety (mean =4.12) From this study also, type of students' study programme has no effect on students' perception neither towards using social networking sites with E-Safety nor in the required skills of using social networking sites effectively. However, there was a significant difference between male and female students in the required skills of using social networking sites at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p = 0.014$). Female students appeared to be more skilful and ready for using social networking sites (mean = 4.08) than male students (mean = 4.24).From this research finding, it can be concluded that students preferred social networking sites with E-Safety, where it can provide them more interactive features than the previous social networking tools. The Study recommends intervention strategies by the institutions, in collaboration with their parents and Government Agencies for a judicious, safe, efficient and effective use of Social networking sites.

Keywords: *Social Networking Sites, E-Safety*

Introduction

Technology has been working very effectively for the last few decades. The greatest changes are being seen, especially in education, through the technological revolution. Invented new angles in technical learning. Initially these technologies were shown as resources-like communication in a traditional classroom. Social networking sites play an extremely effective role in today's society. The role of Social networking sites in the

education system in particular of paramount importance and influence. Students are primarily knowledgeable about browsing or accessing information from web pages through technology and through asynchronous text-based web tools (Greenho et al., 2009, Hartshorn & Ajjan, 2009).

However, in these days Social Networking Sites are widely used in the education system with a wide variety of innovations. These new technologies are helpful for those who use them through interaction, active participation, reflection, critical thinking. In other words, technology is an excellent resource. Communication through technology is highly effective. The wide range of Social Networking Sites conveys the depth and potential of the technology and encourages Social Networking Sites user to have easy and simple capabilities. These new technologies are contributing to strengthening the system by introducing new approaches to changing information sharing.

Today's students use this technology to consider themselves as digital natives. They are the representatives of this generation using computers, cell phones, in the age of technology. Participation in a variety of digital formats is an interaction.

2. Objectives of the study:

The objectives of this study are:

i) To investigate students' perception on the use of social networking sites.

ii) To find out students' perception towards adopting social networking sites

iii) To identify required skills for effective use of social networking sites among students

iv) To identify the difference on students' perception of using social networking sites, their perception towards adopting social networking sites and their skills to use social networking sites based on their gender and type of the scheme of study.

3. Research Questions :

1. What are the students views on using Social Networking Sites ?
2. What is the students awareness towards Social Networking Sites ?
3. Is there any significance difference between the students in terms of views, usage frequency and awareness of Social Networking Sites ?

4. Research Method : The study used a quantitative research design based on a survey method through questionnaires. The survey method employed in this research because it is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents. Besides that, this method is easy to administer and cheaper to conduct.

4.1 Population and Sample : The population of the study was 1500 students of the U.G and P.G students of selected colleges in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The age of the respondents ranged between 18 to 25 years old. 586 students were randomly selected on a table for deterring a sample size by Krejcie and Morgan.

4.2 Data Collection : The data for this study was obtained from the Under Graduate and Post Graduate students of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The data collected from 1500 students. 352 UG students and 234 P.G students from various institutions of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

4.3 Tools of the study : The main research tool of this study is a questionnaire. It consists four sections ,Part A: Social Media Affinity Scale, Part- B :Social Networking Sites usage and needs scale(SNSUN) , Part-C: E-Safety scale and Demographic data of respondents.

4.4 Perception towards E-Safety (Table -1)

The data in the **Table-1** gives an idea about respondents' perception towards E-Safety.

S.No	Question	Mean	SD
7	E-Safety allows to protect online privacy	4.14	0.65
3	E-Safety exposure to content that foments exclusion and hatred	4.11	0.62
5	E-Safety contact with strangers online and coarse language	4.09	0.67
1	E-Safety is an exposure to violent content	3.98	0.57
6	E-Safety protects to harming another person by means of verbal or visual messages using video, audio and software programs.	4.17	0.79
4	E-Safety works on unethical online activities.	4.18	0.58
2	E-Safety allows to develop the healthy online environment to the users.	3.97	0.71
	Overall	**4.12**	**0.09**

*n=586

4.5 Perception towards adopting social Networking Sites (Table-2)

Table-2 shows the findings on students perception towards adopting social networking sites.

NO	Question	Mean	SD
8	I enjoy my time when using Social Networking Sites	4.11	0.68
1	Social Networking tools facilitate knowledge sharing	3.28	1.00
5	Social Networking tools increase students creativity and interactivity	4.07	0.71
2	I can post and evaluate content freely in Social Networking Sites tools	3.88	0.74
7	Through Social Networking Sites learning environment I can get what information I want	3.26	1.01
4	Through Social Networking application, I can freely create and participate in group discussion.	4.24	0.74
6	Social Networking Sites are construct a public or semi public profile within a bounded system	3.97	0.64
3	Social Networking Sites are create an educational learning platform.	3.87	0.75
	Overall	**3.37**	**0.89**

*n=586

4.6 Time spent for Social Networking (Table -3)

Table-3 shows the data of respondents spending time for social networking sites

Time (Hours)	U.G	P.G
0-1 Hrs	176(50%)	98(42%)
1-2 Hrs	134(38%)	75(32%)
2-3 Hrs	28(8%)	33(14%)
More than 3 Hrs	14(4%)	28(12%)
	352(100%)	234 (100%)

4.7 Ranking of SNS based on Students preference (Table -4)

SNS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Whatsap	51	44	3	2	0
Facebook	42	50	4	4	0
Instagram	5	35	31	27	2
Twitter	2	9	7	1	0

4.8 Frequency of Use of SNS Applications (Table -5)

Applications	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total %
Status	54	26	12	8	100
Video Sharing	45	36	14	5	100
Photo Sharing	78	14	8	0	100
Chat	74	12	12	2	100
Comment/Scrap	52	45	2	1	100
Theme	26	24	34	16	100

4.9 Differences of findings based on Gender and Programme of study:

Table-6 and Table-7 shows the Independent-sample t-Test analysis data based on gender and Programme of study

Table 6: t-Test analysis based on gender of study

Findings	Mean		P
	Male	Female	
1.Percption towards using Social Networking Sites	3.74	3.81	0.31
2. Perception towards using Social Networking Sites with E-Safety	4.05	4.15	0.07
3.Students skills in using Social Networking Tools	4.08	4.24	0.01*

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

Table-7 : t-Test analysis based on Programme of study

Findings	Mean		P
	Male	Female	
1.Percption towards using Social Networking Sites	3.77	3.76	0.12
2. Perception towards using Social Networking Sites with E-Safety	4.09	4.13	0.12
3.Students skills in using Social Networking Tools	4.14	4.22	0.54

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

5. Analysis, Findings and Discussion:

All quantitative data had been analyzed descriptively and inferentially using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and Standard deviation had been computed for descriptive data analysis while Independent-sample t-Test had been used for inferential analysis. The percentage of the female respondents was 59.10%,while the male respondents were only 40.90% of the respondents. 56.78% of the respondents enrolled in Under Graduation programme and 43.22% of the respondents enrolled in Post Graduation programme.

Based on the findings stated in Table- 1 most of the students have moderate positive perception on E-Safty. From the findings, most of the students have strong opinion on E-Safety allows to protect online privacy (highest mean).Students strongly agreed that E-Safety contact with strangers online and coarse language. Most of them believe that E-Safety works on unethical online activities as a digital natives they all are having self awareness of E-Safety and like to be regular interact with social media. However, this study has revealed that most of the students agreed that E-Safety protects online privacy and they can get the healthy and safe online atmosphere in the usage of social networking sites or online activities. Students also agreed that E-safety protect from the cyber threats, the spreading of viruses, attacks against websites. Therefore, Students should get an awareness of E-Safety for their peaceful and safe usage of social networking sites or online activities.

Based on data in Table 2, the study revealed that students have positive perceptions towards adopting social networking. Using social networking tools, student can share knowledge and exchange ideas with peers and teachers to enrich their knowledge and make more interactive learning environment.

Social networking tools interactivity features make it different from other websites. Therefore, students believe that social networking tools provide a reliable means of communication. Students also support statement that social networking tools increase students' creativity and interactivity and facilitate knowledge sharing. Additionally, social networking tools affect interaction positively between students-teacher and

students-students where it also provide students with opportunity to choose the best tool for interaction as a solution to the limitations of social communication tools and personal profile tools, most of which are related with learning management systems .This study also revealed that students agreed that through social networking tools they can freely create and participate in group discussion. Students will be able to personalize their own learning. Beside that students also agreed that they can post and evaluate content freely in social networking applications.

Students clear attitude and agreement towards the user control of learning through social networking caused by the level of flexibility and freedom provided by social networking tools. Social networking tools support the personal learning environment and recognise the role of the individual in organising and managing his or her own learning. Social networking tools is an open space for youth to express their tendency to be in touch with peers and friends attracted them to be heavy users of these tools; on the other hand it positively affect interaction between students-teacher and students by creating more satisfying environments.

These findings also indicated Social networking tools meet today's students' demands to have greater control of their own learning and inclusion new technologies that meet their needs and preferences .In terms of what are the required skills the students should have to be able to use those tools effectively, this study has revealed that (Refer Table

3) most of them agreed with all the followings skills:

i. Downloading and uploading files

ii. Experience of using social networking and online discussion tools and Internet

iii. Knowledge and skills to share with others

iv. Willingness to learn from others and online group members

v. Reading and writing skills to communicate

T-test result indicated (Refer Table 6) that there is no significant difference on respondents' perception towards using Social Networking Sites, Perception towards using Social Networking Sites with E-Safety and Students skills in using Social Networking Tools between male and female students. This result is a contrast with the finding which stated that male register more perception towards social networking sites than females. For the required skills to use social networking tools effectively, the study has revealed that there is a significant difference between the two groups for all of three research findings.

6. Conclusion : The overall findings in this study showed that students highly accept social networking sites to be a main platform of the learning in the field of education and other online activities. It is obvious that social social networking sites have the ability to be the preferable tool for the students communication and interaction. Overall, it was evident that the students need more interactive learning environment that allows them to have greater chances to manage to manage and control their online learning environment. The students role based in these findings is to be careful to use social networking sites while learning .Additionally, it is important for an educational institutions to be aware of students current needs and interest related to their learning environment for better knowledge acquisition and academic achievement. The Study recommends intervention strategies by the institutions, in collaboration with their parents and Government Agencies for a judicious, safe , efficient and effective use of Social networking sites.

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