Social Networking Sites: User Friendly Approach - An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Today there are more than 300 Social Networking Sites which have continued to grow in popularity. They play a pivotal role in the life of the people particularly the teenagers. During the last ten years the online world has changed dramatically. A recent survey conducted by the Internet and Mobile Association of India shows that internet users in India has exceeded 350 million in 2015 when compared to 243 million users in 2014. They also state that social media users spend 26 per cent more time with the online networks than watching television. Therefore this paper is an attempt to show the knowledge, awareness and perception regarding Social Networking Sites among the students of Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil. Results collected from the eighty samples indicate that the respondents feel that these social media sites have become part and parcel of their lives. They use these social media primarily for entertainment purpose like 'Fun and jokes' 'Beauty tips', and 'Videos/Message' with its mean score of, 3.70, 3.63, and 3.34 respectively rather than for academic purposes. This paper also suggests that how the social media still can be more users friendly and beneficial to the student community in the upcoming days.

Key words: Social Networking Sites, Social media, User friendly and e-consumers

Introduction

We live in the era of speed culture, where in people spend less time with their kith and kin face to face. There is a craving in every one's heart for relationship and this gap is mitigated with the help of communication mode namely called Social Networking Sites. These sites connect users with their friends, family and acquaintances at a minimum cost. It enhances their relationship from far and wide and helps to stay connected with other people irrespective of caste, religion, nationality etc.

Social media is a very effective tool for connecting with people especially among the teenagers. This makes India the world's seventh largest social network sites visitor. Across the country, individuals, businessmen and politicians are utilising social media, creating an online presence and taking advantage of its various usages. For the second quarter in 2014, India's digital population had an estimated 243 million interest users, of which 106 million were considered to be active social media users.

Statement of the Problem

The teens of today are well versed in modern electronic gadgets and spend considerable amount of time in front of the World Wide Web (WWW). Social networking sites are considered to a big resource for e-learning, where within a nano- second they are able to browse any amount of information on any topic without the help of a tutor or guide. Moreover these sites serve as a platform to build social relations among people who share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real- life connections. The impact of social websites can be positive on students if they use it for productive purposes and if not it may ruin the future and career of the students. Social Networking is an electronic connection between users but unfortunately it has become an addiction for students, teenagers and even

adults. Many youngsters spend their time in chatting and share their photos and profile; as a result they get into problems in the later days. Hence the researcher wants to know to what extent has media become user friendly in the life of the sample respondents. To fill this gap this research problem is undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to measure to what extent has the social networking sites become user friendly in the life of the sample respondents. The following are the specific objectives of the study;

- To find out the knowledge, awareness and perception of social networking sites and its importance among the respondents.
- To discuss the factors influencing the respondents to use the social networking sites.

Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature and based on the survey method. The study comprises of both primary and the secondary data. The primary data was collected on the basis of stratified proportionate random sampling techniques among 16 departments of Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil. From each department five samples were collected and the aggregate of the sample size of the present study is eighty. The collected data were analysed with the help of Likert's Scaling techniques and percentage method. The secondary data were collected from magazines, journals and websites.

Data And Discussion

Any gadget or technology to be called user friendly means the respondents should have some basic Knowledge, Awareness and Perception towards such instruments. These elements are the three key dimensions to decide about the frequency of its usage and so on.

TABLE 1

KNOWLEDGE AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Knowledge awareness and perception about social work	Numbers	Percentage
1	Excellent	11	13.75
2	Very good	23	28.75
3	Good	35	43.75
4	Average	10	12.5
5	Poor	1	1.25
	Total	80	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that 86 per cent of the respondents have sound knowledge, awareness and perception about social media. It is inferred that the respondents belong to 'Y' generation group who are very familiar to operate these modern gadgets compared to 'X' generation people. The following table clearly depicts the convictions in which these social media are used by the respondents in their day to day life and how it has become a part and parcel of their lives.

TABLE 2

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SITES

S.No		Numbers	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	33	41.25
2	Agree	42	52.5
3	Fair	4	5
4	Disagree	4	5
5	Strongly disagree	1	1.25
	Total	80	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows that 52.5 per cent of the respondents agree that social media is very important while 1.25 per cent of them strongly disagree that it is not very important in their personal life. It is inferred that these sites are very helpful to them to retrieve e-learning materials and chat with their friends at a minimum cost. The following table clearly depicts the purposes for which these social media sites have been used.

TABLE - 3

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

S. No	Factors	Always	Very often	Often	Seldom	Never	Total	Average	Rank
1	Beauty tips	24 (120)	24 (96)	16 (48)	11 (22)	5 (5)	80 (291)	(3.64)	2
2	Intimate secrets	10 (50)	14 (56)	17 (51)	10 (20)	29 (29)	80 (206)	(2.57)	5
3	Religious and political belief	5 (25)	10 (40)	24 (72)	13 (26)	28 (28)	80 (191)	(2.39)	6
4	Fun and Jokes	22 (110)	28 (112)	20 (60)	4 (8)	6 (6)	80 (296)	(3.70)	1
5	Videos/ message	20 (100)	18 (72)	23 (69)	7 (14)	12 (12)	80 (267)	(3.34)	3
6	Study materials	17 (85)	12 (48)	26 (78)	8 (16)	17 (17)	80 (244)	(3.05)	4
7	Love affairs	5 (25)	4 (16)	10 (30)	8 (16)	53 (53)	80 (140)	(1.75)	7

Source: Primary data

Table 3 shows that out of seven variables, the first three ranks are given to 'Fun and jokes' 'Beauty tips', and 'Videos/Message' with its mean score of, 3.70, 3.63, and 3.34 respectively. The last three ranks are given to 'Love affairs', 'Religious and political belief' and 'Intimate secrets'. It is inferred that the respondents use these sites for fun and laughter rather than academic purposes.

Findings

- 86 per cent of the respondents have sound knowledge, awareness and perception about social media. It is inferred that the respondents belong to the 'Y' generation and they operate these modern gadgets freely when compared to the X generation people.

- 52.5 per cent of the respondents agree that social media is very important while 1.25 per cent of them strongly disagree that it is not very important in their personal life. It is inferred that these sites are very helpful to them to retrieve e-learning materials and chat with their friends at a minimum cost.

- Out of the seven variables, the first three ranks are given to 'Fun and jokes' 'Beauty tips', and 'Videos/Message' with its mean score of, 3.70, 3.63, and 3.34 respectively. The last three ranks are given to 'Love affairs', 'Religious and political belief' and 'Intimate secrets'. It is inferred that the social media is used for fun and laughter rather than academic purposes.

Suggestions

- Since the social media sites are user friendly, the teenagers should know to distinguish between the constructive and destructive sites which in turn would enhance their knowledge, performance and academic intelligence and avoid wrong sites which could tarnish their image or career.

- The undergraduate students are primarily interested in entertainment activities. Hence it is advisable that the parents observe and monitor their children when they use these sites which might help their children not to be entangled in highly avoidable personal problems.

- Since the college goers are interested in the social networking sites, the college professors can request the students to send their assignments or any subject related discussion matter via social media so as to enhance their learning habits which would lead to greater heights of academic performance and help them to channelize their energy towards productive purposes.

Conclusion

Social media is one of the boons to e-consumers and it is a cheaper mode of communication. The technology and application of social media is user friendly and it attracts the users. Today billions of users are connected with each other in and around the world. However the most common drawback of social networking sites are the users have been addicted to these media sitting glued in front of the monitor for hours together and are entangled in several issues which ruins both the career and future of the young generation. Hence it requires the attention of the policy makers as well as the persons who are directly or

indirectly connected to the youngsters. This in turn would mould our youngsters towards a purpose driven life and thus the students would become the trend setters in the society.

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