

# A STUDY ON THE USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF KRISHNA DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

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## Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the use of social networking sites among the undergraduate students of Krishna District. In the context of today's electronic media, social networking sites have come to mean individuals, using the Internet and web application to communicate in previously impossible ways. The main aim of this study is to examine the purpose of using the social networking sites. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design which was employed to derive responses from a sample size of 300 undergraduate students of Krishna District who were selected via random sampling techniques. Data are collected from this population using questionnaire. The 300 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire correctly representing 100% response. The result of the study reveals that mostly all the students were using the social networking sites in interaction with friends, communicating with faculty members, sharing files and having academic discussions, uploading videos and watching movies etc. Facebook, My Space, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype and others are few such sites that attract maximum of the youth to tune in to them and thereby embodies their own merits and demerits that desperately need to create an actual picture among the youth. It has become an evident and usual sight to face individuals being insensitive to chat in worshipping places, homes when relatives and guests are around, highways, schools, colleges and social gatherings wherein they are preoccupied which results in their inability to prioritize as to what is important and what isn't. Attention has been shifted from real to virtual world and visible to invisible friends.

**Key Words:** Social networking sites, Internet, College students.

## I Introduction

In recent years, the online community has moved a stepped further in connecting people. Social networking was born, and through this online platform, people can share their thoughts, post pictures, videos and even invite people to events. Social networking websites have created virtual communities wherein communication is not just based on the information required but at a personal level as well. The rapid growth and desirability of Social Networking Sites has been witnessed in almost every country. India considered a fast developing country has not lagged behind. As such, the usage of social media is rampant among citizens and they hail from every class. Indian society has adopted the new age media, i.e., social networking along with maintaining its traditions.

Social Networking sites are termed as web based services that give an opportunity to individuals to create their own personal profile with the choice of their own list of users and thereby connect with them in an altogether public forum that provides them with features such as chatting, blogging, video calling, mobile connectivity and video/photo sharing. People spend more than usual hours on social networking sites to download pictures, browse through updates seek entertainment and chat around with friends to keep themselves connected to one another. These sites have held an addiction to the youth wherein they find it difficult to concentrate on their work and prefer logging in and jumping across one site to another. Some have derived benefit out of these sites whereas some have become academically challenged by the use of these websites. Individuals have set their own limits as to when and when not to access these websites but we witness very few out of the lot who does not access or make use of these sites at all. This paper will be therefore able to review the available literature to study.

New developments in the technological world have made the internet an innovative way for individuals and families to communicate. Social media networks have created a phenomenon on the internet that has gained popularity over the last decade. People use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace to create and sustain relationships with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). These social media sites let those who use them create personal profiles, while connecting with other users of the sites. Users

can upload photographs, post what they are doing at any given time, and send personal or public messages to whomever they choose. In this “information age,” social media sites seem to be growing in popularity rapidly, especially among young adults

## II Review of literature

Since the last decade the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is increasing rapidly throughout the world. Evidently Social Networking Sites have become a significant part of the lives of these youth (Gemmill and Peterson: 2006). Compared with any other group of people the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is more, mainly because they are attracted extensively to the new technology and particularly to the opportunity it offers for creating social networks.

### Studies on the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students

Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as public web-based services that allow users to develop a personal profile, identify other users (“friends”) with whom they have a connection, read and react to postings made by other users on the site, and send and receive messages either privately or publicly. Individuals may choose to send private messages, write on other user’s walls, organize social activities, and keep informed about other user’s daily activities. However, users can limit themselves on what information they would like to share publicly with others. Some items they may choose to include are: pictures, favorite books and movies, birthday, relationship status, and location (Tufekci, 2008).

Similarly, one study reported that over 27% of young adults used a social networking site every day in 2009 (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Social network sites help fulfill communication needs and wants. It is a convenient method of communication and provides the ability to stay connected with friends and family, but on the users own rate and time (Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). Users can manage their interactions within their own schedule by choosing when they want to read and respond. The internet communication is a solitary activity usually done alone. However, it is efficient because it is a one-to-many method of communication that allows users to quickly spread information.

Keol Lim and Ellen B Meier (2012) in their study clearly highlighted how and why Korean students use Social Networking Sites and what are the advantages they find by using Social Networking Sites. The study as such begins with the explanation of how the number of international students getting admission in U S universities has increased. It also refers to psychological experiences of international students such as disorientation, nostalgic depressive reactions, and feelings of isolation, alienation and powerlessness. However, international students may have limited ways to cope with stress, which could lead to stress-related illnesses such as anxiety or depression. Hence these limitations make it hard for international students to acclimatize themselves new circumstances.

Bicen and Cavus (2010) evaluated the usage of Social Networking Sites among students in the department of computer education instructional technology and found which social networking sites are the most preferred by students. The study revealed that use and sharing of knowledge on Internet is made an integral part of college students’ lives. Results show that Live Spaces and Facebook are the commonly used sites by the students.

Park (2010) explores the usage of Social Networking Sites by different university users. He studied three groups of users' (undergraduate, graduate and faculty) at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. The analysis indicated that the three groups of users demonstrated distinct patterns of use of social networking sites. The study stipulated that undergraduates used the profile service more than the community service while graduates used the community service more than the profile service. Yet most of the faculty members were not active users.

## III Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to find out the use of social network sites by undergraduate students of Krishna District. The specific purposes of the study are as follow:

1. To study about socio-demographic profile and influence on usage of social networking sites.
2. To examine the frequency of the use of social networking sites by undergraduates.

## IV Research Methodology

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey seeks to find out certain facts concerning an existing phenomenon.

The study intends to elicit the opinions of the respondents on use of social networking sites among undergraduate students of Krishna District. The area of the study selected is Krishna District. The choice of the area was for proximity and to ensure effective distribution and collection of data through the use of a questionnaire. The population of this study comprises four divisions of Krishna

District namely Machilipatnam division, Gudivada division, Vijayawada division, Nuzvid division based on the map provided by Krishna district. The sample size is 300. Simple random sampling on the other hand, selected as a method of drawing a sample from the population so that each member of the population is given an equal and independent chance of being selected. The instrument for data collection was a self constructed questionnaire. It was titled a study on the usage of social networking sites among the undergraduate students of Krishna District.

The questionnaire consist of two broad parts; Part A and part B. part A is on background and characteristics of the respondents while part B consists of various reasons for frequent use of social networking sites. This contains various networking sites used by the respondent with twenty four items. The questionnaire was homogeneously keyed in a 5-point scale and the subjects were guided to respond to each item thus: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; N- Neutral; SD-Strongly Disagree; D-Disagree. Three hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents (undergraduate students of Krishna District) and were collected to ensure an accurate return rate.

## V Data Analysis and Presentation

**Table 1:** This table shows the gender details.

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cummulative Percent
Male	91	30	30	30
Female	209	70	70	100
Total	300	100	100	-----

From the above table, it is clear that out of 300 respondents, 30% of them are male and remaining 70% are female.

**Table 2:** This table shows the respondents membership in various sites.

No. of Sites	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cummulative Percent
2	102	34	34.6	34.6
4	117	39	39.7	74.3
6	33	11	11.22	85.52
8	19	6.33	6.46	91.98
>10	23	7.66	7.82	100
Missing	6	2	-----	-----
Total	300	100	100	-----

From the above tabular form, it can be inferred that 34% of the respondents are members of 2 social networking sites, 39% of the respondents have membership in 4 social networking sites, 11% of them are members of 6 social networking sites, 6.33% of the respondents have their membership in 8 Social networking sites and remaining 7.66% of the respondents said that they have membership in more than 10 social networking sites.

**Table 3:** This table shows the number of years the respondents have been using social networking sites.

Years of use	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cummulative Percent
1-2 Years	101	33.66	33.89	33.89
2-3 Years	134	44.66	44.96	78.85
>3 Years	63	21	21.14	100
Missing	2	6.66	-----	-----
Total	300	100	100	-----

The above table shows that out of total population, 33.66% of the respondents have been using the social networking sites since 2 years, 44.66% of them said that they have been using since 3 years, and remaining 21% of the respondents replied that they have been using social networking sites since more than 3 years.

**Table 4:** This table shows the reasons for frequent use of social media networks.

S.No	Purpose	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1	Making comment on friends	100	66	62	41	29	59.6	3.14
2	Most of my friends use it	78	142	46	26	6	59.6	6.14
3	Receiving & sending messages	104	135	42	12	4	59.4	6.66
4	Playing games	55	112	73	40	16	59.2	4.82
5	Sharing files	94	125	47	19	7	58.4	5.78
6	Communicating with faculty members	40	96	84	46	31	59.4	3.31
7	Communicating with friends about academic interests	69	132	70	15	11	59.4	5.71
8	Making academic discussion groups	63	125	75	18	13	58.8	5.29
9	Downloading music / video	99	132	49	12	5	59.4	6.36
10	Uploading or sharing music \ video	70	117	67	23	14	58.2	4.78
11	Posting photos	70	100	68	39	19	59.2	3.59
12	Blogging	33	92	83	48	25	56.2	3.45
13	Creating polls/quizzes or surveys	49	85	81	47	26	57.6	2.87
14	Effective tool for e-learning	68	123	60	34	8	58.6	4.96
15	Watching movies	71	137	55	20	15	59.6	5.68
16	Making dubs/mash	44	97	74	46	32	58.6	3.04
17	Information sharing	96	126	47	16	11	59.2	5.81
18	Chatting	86	125	49	21	10	58.2	5.48
19	Entertainment	93	125	52	15	9	58.8	5.77
20	Phonography	49	96	83	34	23	57	3.62
21	Sports News	58	112	74	32	18	58.8	4.25
22	Status Update	70	114	73	25	13	59	4.69
23	Comments/Wall post	57	101	75	45	17	59	3.64
24	Others	53	85	81	33	30	56.4	2.99

The above tabular form shows the mean responses for the frequent use of social networking sites.

## VI Findings

Respondents responded positively for the purpose of using social networking sites. The findings of this study show that undergraduate students of Krishna district use social networking sites for different purposes and the sites often favour them. The investigation revealed that undergraduate students of Krishna district use the social networking sites to communicate with friends, watching movies, for discussing national issues like politics, economy and religious matters, and for academic purposes.

It was also revealed that one of the purposes which undergraduates of Krishna district use social networking site to watch movies(film) and .The revelation here is similar to the findings of Haridakis and Hanson (2009) who submitted after their study entitled ‘‘Social interaction and co-viewing with YouTube: blending social connection and mass communication,’’ that the group they studied viewed YouTube for purposes of leisure entertainment characterised by two specific motives; social interaction and co-viewing. So, here it has been found out that one of the students’ purposes of using social networking sites is watching movies. This was seen as accepted with the statement: ‘students use social networking sites for watching movies(films)’. Besides, it was also revealed that the students use the social networking sites because they communicate and discuss serious national issues like politics, economy and religious matters on the new media.



This finding is encouraging as it shows that students do have brainstorm on national issues via the social networking sites. This will be used for them to generate ideas that can be implemented for the good of the nation. So, the social networking sites provide a similar forum for the people to discuss relevant national matters, just like Mc Quail (2010) observed that the mass media as a whole do when he remarks that, “mass media often provide topics of conversation for discussion and thus help to lubricate social life in family’s work places”. From the study greater respondents accepted the statements ‘students use social networking sites for discussion of serious national issues like politics, economy and religious matters’. This means that the social networking sites are platforms for the students to discuss and share ideas and information on national matters, thereby educate themselves on such issues.

This further justified the application of uses of gratification theory to this study, as the finding proves that the social media give the students room for getting essential information and education; this is one of their reasons for using the media. So, the findings here showed that the students of Krishna district use the social networking sites for entertainment, communication and educational purposes.

## VII Discussion

Social networking provides advancements especially in communication and self expression and the use of social networking is expanding. Social Networking Sites are used by diverse categories of users for a variety of purposes. The main motive of the Social Networking Sites is to provide an interactive environment to communicate with peers and get useful information.

The popularity of social networks grows rapidly. These social sites have become effective (to an extent) means of communicating ideas and feelings among their users. Thus, they are beginning to get more attention from educational institutions. Gardner (2009) opined that institutions are taking drastic steps to educate students on the use of the sites, especially in the areas of the privacy, legal issue and potential socio-economic and psychological dangers.

In addition, social networking enhances a student’s sense of community, sharing and collaboration brings an additional responsibility and workload, which some students find inflexible and rather “forced” (Minocha, 2009). This technology uses web cams or voice-only soft ware to hold virtual seminars online. This is extremely useful for collaborations where, the partners live in different parts of the globe. Through the use of social networking sites students are able to express themselves, communicate and collect profiles that highlight their talent and experience.

According to Konetes and McKeague in 2011, came up with certain revelations about the uses of the social networking sites especially, facebook, The researchers reported that, ‘students are using facebook and other channels to develop their identities, beliefs on various issues such as politics, religion, economy and work, as well as to pioneer and develop intimate relationships.’ Also, Gross(2004)noted that ‘students use social networking sites not only for leisure and personal socialization but also as a platform for more meaningful and serious deliberations, and students are using social networking for making friends, sharing links, online learning, finding jobs to accomplish their economic, educational, political and social being.’

Researchers have fast realize the need to incorporate this into the educational faculties, as a resource to support the educational communications between student and faculties, even though institutions of higher learning have tried preventing students from accessing technologies which is of less important to their academic benefit.

## VIII Conclusion

Social Networking Sites are important tools of communication, entertainment and sharing in this era. As such there has been considerable rise in its usage especially in the Indian Society. As a matter of fact, the youngsters are more prone to be involved in Social Networking sites than any other group. Social Networking Sites facilitate sharing of information, increasing contacts and so on. Internet has enabled social interaction through Social Networking Sites. The most popular Social Networking Sites are Facebook, You tube, Twitter, Google plus and many others. Through these networking sites a person can engage in innumerable activities such as sharing videos and pictures, having access to national as well as international contacts, and so on.

The results obtained from this study have shown that a reasonable number of undergraduate students of Krishna district use the social networking sites. Therefore, the popularity of the social networking usage by undergraduate students and the benefits it has on the student –users have been confirmed from the findings of this study. There are also various purposes for which the students use the social networking sites to achieve and that have been investigated. Finally, from the results of the study the researcher sees the reason why a famous media scholar argued that technology can be used in ways beneficial and otherwise. Technology is a double-edged sword. Its power for bad and good resides in the users Baran(2010).Based on this, it is instructive to note that the relevant government authorities and other sponsors of the students, have to take good measures to ensure that they(student) are made to be aware of how and why they use the social networking sites.

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