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## SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

(with special reference to Students in Erode)

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### ABSTRACT

The Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become all pervasive, interactive and participatory communication sources and resources in modern times. The SNS application has become a new way of life in all modern organizations including the educational institutions. SNS is deeply penetrating into today's culture and lifestyle of humans. It has not only left its marks in social life but also in education as well in the form of blended learning. Researchers are now striving to utilize SNS as pedagogy re-engineering tool for academics. The present investigation was carried out to understand the perception of students and teachers on the inclusion of Social Networking Sites as a pedagogy tool into Higher Education Institutes and its impact on Higher Education.

**Key words:** Social Networking Sites, higher education, blended learning.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology is what that makes a man's life easy and allows him to perform a given task in fraction of seconds which was not possible earlier. Social media is also one of the gifts of technology. It is a platform through which people can share their opinions, views and ideas. Also social media has lot of influence on the education system as well. It can be used for improving the teaching and learning processes. It encourages collaborative learning, group studies and interaction. The social networking sites furnished multi-faceted services to the mankind which perplex electronic coat of chain, online tell tales out of school,

boards, blogs, follow in sequence of carefree and the interlinked World Wide Web pages during thousands and thousands of smaller swine, person experienced in something, assumed, non-temporal, giggle, commercial struggle, tidy, political and authorities servers benefits the user. World Wide Web opens nifty possibilities for customers by the whole of the hold of bringing full the barriers of top, anticipate and value. The mind reader enabled the customers to reside anonymous, or be faceless, voiceless, and too communicate mutually text or describe illustration<sup>1</sup>.

The social networking sites have lot of influence on the education system as well. It can be used for improving the teaching and learning processes. It encourages collaborative learning, group studies and interaction. It is widely agreed that more interaction between the students and teachers will lead to generation of more ideas and brain storming. It helps in clarifying of doubts and leads to conducting of doubt tutorials on the group itself. Today e-Books and online videos are very good source of learning. They prove to be so knowledgeable. The best part is that as per our convenience we can carry on with our studying, it helps in the sharing of great ideas related to studies and education as well. It helps like-minded people to get together and plan their studying schedule. It provides so many videos, texts and audio materials which help in improvising and easing the teaching and learning processes<sup>2</sup>.

The Social Networking Sites leads to study session among like-minded people, hence more interactions and collaboration. Mutual discussions through social media increases the level of information and also the quality of information and thus resulting in improved quality of education more interaction through social media results in more competition to outperform others which further improves the level of knowledge. Higher level of knowledge and better quality of information improves the overall academic performance<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social Networking Sites platform is changing the way businesses are being conducted. Education sector not being an exception has also been positively affected by the use of social Networking sites like, Facebook, LinedIn, Google+, instagram, twitter, Youtube etc. Of late many universities and education service providers have reportedly increased use of social media marketing to promote their courses and attract students. Educators are becoming aware of the potential benefits of social media in education. Many faculties had realized the fact that 75% of students are on social media on an average of five hours a day. Social media has made us closer to people from different parts of the world. Use of social media has become a part of the business marketing mix. The year 2011 has witnessed a rise in using social media as a marketing channel and the year 2019-20 has witnessed full-fledged use of it creating the deliberate need of

<sup>1</sup> Z. Tufekci, *Grooming, gossip, Facebook, and MySpace, Information, Communication & Society*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 544-564, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Mahajan, P.: *Use of social networking in a linguistically and culturally rich India. Int. Inf. Libr. Rev.* 41(3), 129–136 (2009)

<sup>3</sup> Lever, W.F.: *Innovation in urban policy: collaboration rather than competition between cities. Urban Compet. Innovation* 91 (2014)

it. Socializing on social platform has become a part of our culture. Social media has made available a platform where people can discuss and widen their knowledge base<sup>4</sup>.

Students are one of the most important users of the virtual world and social networks. The overuse of social networks has positive and negative academic, social, and health consequences for the students. Reduced academic performance is one of the most important consequences of social networking overuse for students. Social networks play a crucial role in learning environments as a key communicational channel and a source of social support. Many social networking websites, such as Edmodo, are specifically designed for learning. Social networks have many advantages in learning as they provide wide access to information and information resources, reduce barriers to group interaction and telecommunications, support collaborative learning activities, encourage learners to learn more about self-learning, increase engagement and learner's motivation, enhance engagement of learners with each other and their teachers and support active and social learning.

In general, the emergence of new technologies such as internet and social networks, in addition to providing opportunities in facilitating and improving the quality of global communications, has created some threats. When the use of social networks is managed poorly, they can have negative consequences at the individual and social levels. Social networking addiction is one of the consequences that many social network users may experience. Thus, the extensive use of social networks is a new form of soft addiction<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. NEED OF THE STUDY

Social media tools are observed to play a vital role in the renovation of the conventional teaching and learning practices across the globe. Though primarily developed for online social communication, social media platforms tend to possess suitable tools that can be used for instructional purposes in order to initiate active learning among students. Additionally, the social publishing features that support User Generated Content act as powerful drivers in converting social media sites into informal, networked and constructive virtual learning environments<sup>6</sup>.

Social Networking Sites is a tool to build social networks correlations among those who share common interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. Initially, social media was used for making online friends, developing relationships, business contacts and interacting with global masses. Recently, it has been used for mobilizing youngsters for social causes and Higher education as well. Social Networking Sites differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Clyde, L.A., "Library weblogs, *Library management*", 25(4/5), 2004, pp.183-189.

<sup>5</sup> Aken. J., "Out dated and irrelevant? *American Libraries* 38(8), 2007, pp. 54-56.

<sup>6</sup> Teddlie, C., Yu, F. (2007). *Mixed methods sampling a typology with examples. Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 77–100.

<sup>7</sup> Guber, Abe, "Social media in Undergraduate University Admissions". Thesis

#### 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Chakraborty (2020)** in her paper entitled 'Activities and reasons for using Social Networking Sites by the research scholars in NEHU: A study on Facebook and Research Gate' attempts to study the activity and reasons for using SNSs by the research scholars of North Eastern Hill University. The findings of the study shows that most of the researchers from social science background used SNSs for education and research point of view and scholars from pure science think that Social Networking sites has no role on research and education<sup>8</sup>.

**Har Singh and Anil Kumar (2019)** in their paper entitled 'Use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the research scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh: A study' explored to study the activities and purposes for using SNSs by the scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh. The findings of their study shows that majority of the respondents were found to be aware and making use of such applications in their research work. Their study also reveals that Facebook is the most popular SNSs by all categories of researchers<sup>9</sup>.

**Shambare.R (2018)** Conducting a study on social networking habits among students their study shows that such media most frequently used by Youngers and Facebook is most widely used by a large number of communities and has multiple effects on the life of students. High speed and fast internet approach and mobile technology development are the most significant factors behind social networking websites adoption and accessibility and suggest that Social networks improve their awareness level. The short and fast technique to manage web and the improvement of PDA development are most big drivers in the back of the choice and accessibility with character to person correspondence locations and count on that SNS replace their information level<sup>10</sup>.

**Twitter Kim (2017)** employments of commonplace understudies are held by means of net and relational organisation functions. Gigantically, for extraordinary primary understudies who may be utilising their internet for constructing new associations, in addition for view, and special understudies using the internet of their host realm. To increase new to spend on Face book as student. Students which use Facebook more for data sharing and collecting activities get high grades than those who used it for socializing This evidence suggest that students use Face book for study activities however it is positive or not<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Chakraborty (2020), *Activities and reasons for using Social Networking Sites by the research scholars in NEHU: A study on Facebook and Research Gate*, January 13, [www.cis-india.org](http://www.cis-india.org) 14.

<sup>9</sup> Har Singh and Anil Kumar (2019) in their paper entitled 'Use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the research scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh: A study' explored to study the activities and purposes for using SNSs by the scholars of Panjab University, Chandigarh, 51(1):318–336.

<sup>10</sup> Shambare R, Rugimbana R. *Financial literacy among the educated: An exploratory study of selected university students in South Africa. Thunderbird International Business Review [Internet]. Wiley; 2018 Jun 22;54(4):581–90*

<sup>11</sup> Kim (2017) *The Use Of Social Media For Academic Practice. Kentucky Journal of Higher Education Policy and Practice, 1(2), 1-20.*

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the purpose of using Social Networking Sites by respondents in the study area.
- To examine the attitude of respondents towards Social Networking Sites in the study area.
- To analyse the problems faced by respondents in using Social Networking Sites.

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- ✓ Sample size - 200
- ✓ Respondents - Students
- ✓ Sampling Method - Stratified random sampling method
- ✓ Sample Plan - Interview schedule (Primary Data)
- ✓ Study area - Erode
- ✓ Data analysis - SPSS (IBM 25.0)

## 7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

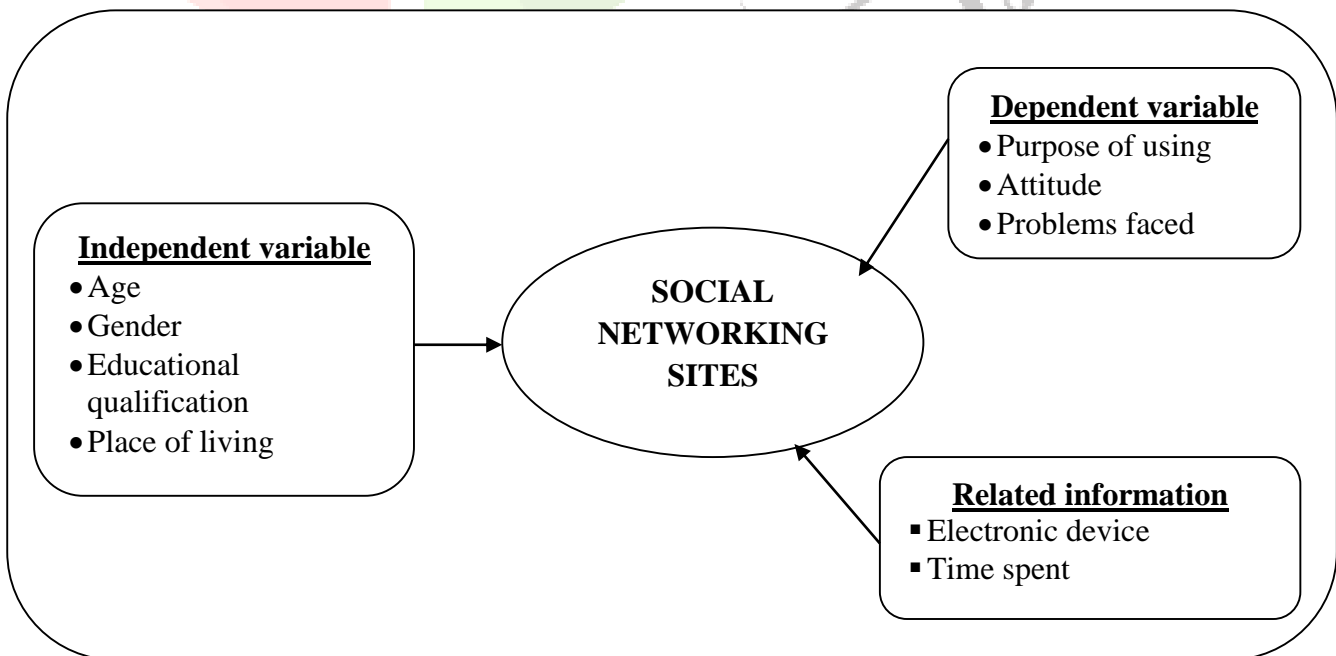
- ❖ The study is confined to the respondents of Erode only.
- ❖ Due to time constrain , the research period was limited
- ❖ The primary data were collected through interview method which is subjected to recall bias.

## 8. FRAMED HYPOTHESIS

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between the independent variables of respondents and dependent variables of respondents.

**Ho:** There is no significant association between the dependent variables of respondents and attitude of respondents towards Social media.

## 9. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS



## 10. ANALYSIS OF DATA

**Table 1**  
**Distribution on overall result of Profile of respondents (Majority only)**

Sl.no	Particulars	Variable	No. of respondents	Percentage
<b>Personal Profile</b>				
1	Age	18-19 years	88	44
2	Gender	male	136	68
3	Educational qualification	Bachelor Degree	118	59
4	Place of living	Semi-urban	102	51
<b>Related information</b>				
5	Electronic device	Smart phone	136	68
6	Time spend	More than 5 hours	84	42

Source: Primary Data

**Table 2**  
**Distribution on Social Networking Sites - simple ranking**

Sl.no	Account	No.of response	Rank
1	Facebook	200	1
2	WhatsApp	200	1
3	Instagram	123	9
4	Zoom	160	6
5	Snapchat	110	10
6	Hike	51	13
7	Skype	152	7
8	YouTube	200	1
9	Twitter	130	8
10	LinkedIn	178	5
11	Hi5	20	14
12	Google plus	200	1
13	Duo	63	12
14	MySpace	92	11

Source: Computed Data

**Table 3**  
**Distribution on simple ranking**

Purpose	Particulars	Mean	SD	Rank
1	P1	39.00	2.32	5
2	P2	38.29	2.38	6
3	P3	35.60	3.53	11
4	P4	39.44	2.27	4
5	P5	35.61	3.53	10
6	P6	39.76	2.12	1
7	P7	35.83	2.90	9
8	P8	39.46	2.20	2
9	P9	39.45	2.27	3
10	P10	36.87	2.59	8
11	P11	37.79	2.40	7

Source: Computed Data

**Table 4**  
**Distribution on attitude – WAS**

Attitude	5	4	3	2	1	Total	WAS	Rank
A1	253	331	108	46	8	746	50	17
A2	242	272	181	36	6	736	49	20
A3	509	285	75	2	1	872	58	5
A4	665	156	43	19	4	888	59	3
A5	502	268	74	11	2	857	57	6
A6	349	395	91	2	0	836	56	12
A7	493	329	24	7	8	861	57	6
A8	428	294	80	19	5	825	55	15
A9	470	259	86	17	4	836	56	12
A10	693	201	12	7	3	917	61	2
A11	470	328	38	16	4	855	57	6
A12	450	279	79	20	4	832	55	15
A13	461	328	43	10	7	848	57	6
A14	298	225	162	56	2	743	50	17
A15	700	221	7	3	1	932	62	1
A16	537	248	43	24	4	856	57	6
A17	184	305	204	25	7	724	48	21
A18	263	231	163	48	12	716	48	21
A19	272	262	156	54	1	746	50	17
A20	665	156	43	20	4	888	59	3
A21	502	268	74	12	2	858	57	6
A22	351	389	89	2	2	833	56	12

Source: Computed Data

**Table 5**  
**Distribution on problems – WAS**

Problems	5	4	3	2	1	Total	WAS	Rank
PSM1	89	199	108	147	27	569	38	6
PSM2	231	346	181	50	9	817	54	2
PSM3	343	322	75	33	7	780	52	4
PSM4	112	132	43	142	20	450	30	7
PSM5	337	256	74	54	12	733	49	5
PSM6	823	99	91	7	4	1023	68	1
PSM7	456	279	24	28	11	798	53	3

Source: Computed Data

**Table 6**  
**Distribution on overall result of Chi-square @ 5% and 1% level of significance**

Dependent variables	Independent variables	P-value	d.f	Result
Purpose of using	Age	0.037	4	11 Significant
	Gender	0.022	4	
	Educational qualification	0.005	2	
	Place of living	0.041	4	
	Electronic device	0.050	5	
	Time spend	0.020	5	
Attitude towards social media	Age	0.018	4	22 Significant
	Gender	0.034	4	
	Educational qualification	0.039	2	
	Place of living	0.047	4	
	Electronic device	0.030	2	
	Time spend	0.036	4	
Problems faced	Age	0.030	4	7 Significant
	Gender	0.031	4	
	Educational qualification	0.044	2	
	Place of living	0.072	4	
	Electronic device	0.030	2	
	Time spend	0.023	4	

Source: Computed Data

**Table 7**  
**Distribution on factor analysis**

Sl.no	Particulars	F1	F2	h <sup>2</sup>
1	A1	0.932	0.211	0.915
2	A2	0.198	0.241	0.921
3	A3	0.919	0.667	0.921
4	A4	0.841	0.542	0.748
5	A5	0.666	0.370	0.799
6	A6	0.466	0.619	0.829
7	A7	0.545	0.545	0.861
8	A8	0.919	0.932	0.941
9	A9	0.939	0.198	0.900
10	A10	0.102	0.325	0.937
11	A11	0.466	0.545	0.721
12	A12	0.425	0.649	0.900
13	A13	0.386	0.666	0.909
14	A14	0.466	0.665	0.866
15	A15	0.241	0.609	0.211
16	A16	0.919	0.998	<b>0.946</b>
17	A17	0.939	0.919	0.875
18	A18	0.102	0.841	0.545
19	A19	0.859	0.129	0.921
20	A20	0.866	0.883	0.499
21	A21	0.662	0.452	0.921
22	A22	0.592	0.616	0.748
<b>Eigen Value</b>		<b>2.045</b>	1.207	
<b>Percentage of variation</b>		8.100	9.106	
<b>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation, A Rotation converged in 22 iterations</b>				



**Source: Computed Data****11. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**Percentage analysis - Profile of the respondents:** It was found that majority on respondents- under age group fall under the category 18-20 years 88 (44%) followed by Gender majority is male 136 (68%), Educational qualification Bachelor degree 118(59%) and for Place of living semi-urban 102(51%).

**Purpose:** for analysis the purpose of using social media was coded as P1: Sharing information, P2: Networking, P3: Interacting with remote attendees, P4: Asking questions/answering questions, P5: Delivering presentation in creative way, P6: Staying in touch with co-workers/friends/family, P7: Follow officials on social media, P8: Purchase of things/books/food etc., P9: To read/study/watch video to update knowledge, P10: Attend meeting of the group I belong to and P11: Use high tech devices that is relevant to my job/work. From the table it was found that P6 was ranked first followed by P8,P9, P4 and finally P3 ranked last.

**Weighted Average Score (WAS) - Attitude:** For the purpose of analysis the variables of attitude was coded as A1: Friends or families use social media frequently, A2: From a technical viewpoint, Social media is a useful technology, A3: Social media is a wonderful innovation, A4: Social media is a valuable social networking service, A5: Time appears to go very quickly when using social media, A6: Using Social media it is able to block out most other distractions, A7: Fun interacting with Social media, A8: Feel control over interaction with Social media, A9: Using Social media arouses imagination, A10: Social media can be adapted to meet a variety of needs, A11: The user interface of Social media has a well-organized appearance, A12: Social media is trustworthy, A13: The information provided by Social media is accurate, A14: The information from Social media is always up to date, A15: Find Social media easy to use, A16: Using Social media helps connect with others instantaneously, A17: Using Social media enhances personal effectiveness, A18: Find Social media to be useful in work, A19: Use Social media to learn more about other people in classes/works, A20: Use Social media to learn more about other people living near, A21: Use Social media to keep in touch with old friends/friends/co-workers and A22: Use Social media to meet new people. From the above table for 22 variables loaded it was found that A15 was ranked first followed by A10, A20 and finally A17 and A18 ranked last.

**Problems:** For the purpose of analysis the variables of problems was coded as PSM1: Internet Fraud (Giving false information through chatting, email, message boards, etc..), PSM2: Leaking Private Information (with others without his/her knowledge), PSM3: Cyber bullying (Hurting others through false message/information), PSM4: Affecting communication skills (Possibilities of individual communication skills getting suppressed), PSM5: Psychological Disorder (Anxiety, Depression, Loneliness), PSM6: Narcissism (One who admires himself too much) and PSM7: Antisocial Behaviour. From the above table for 7 it was found that PSM6 was ranked first followed by PSM2, PSM7 and finally PSM4 ranked last.

**Chi-square:** The value of the chi-square statistics for independent variables and dependent variables is that the p value is less than the designated alpha level (0.05), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted [ $H_a$ : There is significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variables] is accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant relationship between independent variables and dependent variables in the study area.

**Factor analysis:** For depicting the correlation matrix between dependent variables and Factors (F1 and F2) the factors were denoted as F1: Purpose of using social media and F2: Problem faced by respondents, in the above table we can find loading of 22 variables on two factors extracted. It is found that the highest absolute loading ( $h^2$ ) is observed as 0.946 which is A-16, it is also found that the Eigen value showed highest value of 2.045 on F1 which means that this factor has stronger association with the variable compared to the other variables, it is also noted that there are only positive loading between the variables.

## 12. SUGGESTIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The higher educational institutions are required to prepare grounds for the optimum use of social media for participatory, inclusive and integrated educational development, explore new avenues and opportunities for judicious and creative use of social media for educational development, should motivate the learners to use social media as complimentary tools of learning, should harness the potentials of social media for educational progress, should use social media for better social networking and social capital development, should create a balance between social media association and academic activities, should guide the students to ensure judicious use of social media and prevent negative addiction of social media.

The higher educational institutions should promote the new generation of social media content producers to add real-world knowledge to their learning and the course in general, should enable the students to gain mastery over social media application and achieve success in their academic pursuits, should ensure the meaningful inclusion of social media in the higher-level academic courses, should encourage the teachers to design and incorporate social media activities into their course syllabi, should use new social media class room approaches that extend and enhance teacher-student interactions, should enable the visiting faculties and other resource persons to participate in the sharing of knowledge by using social media, should develop social media ethics in order to promote better culture of learning and social networking.

## 13. CONCLUSION

For learning and teaching, social media is used in a variety of different contexts - language learning, writing development, after class discussion, synchronous and asynchronous communication, community building and curricular tool. The use of social media in higher education is changing the nature of the relationships of learners and teachers. Social media provides a unique stage for interaction amongst students and teachers and amongst students themselves. Through social media, students find it easy as well as convenient to communicate, access information, and to provide information. Studies have shown that in the recent years academics have been expanding their social media usage to offer after hours support for

students, deliver and host lectures, disseminate information and engage in discussion. The use of social media has also demonstrated increased teacher-student and student-student interaction. With social media, students also become adept at the use of online technologies in learning environments. Studies have indicated that the use of social media in higher education has enhanced learning, increased participation and engagement, improved content dissemination and improved pedagogy and information sharing<sup>12</sup>.

Social Networking Sites continues to transform pedagogy and can be used to support learning and teaching activities that were traditionally confined to classrooms. The use of social media in higher education presents many challenges but its importance cannot be ignored. Research has established that a majority of academics are of the perception that social media may be employed successfully in supporting the provision of student centered learning approach. With the usage of social media, students no longer continue to remain passive absorbers of knowledge but become co-producers and contributors. In the current educational environment, learning has become more of a social process and the use of social media strengthens that process. The use of social media, like in many other areas, is here to stay in higher education settings too. What needs to be worked out is how higher education institutions globally continue to embrace social media to their own benefit<sup>13</sup>.

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