

COLLEGE STUDENTS AS SOCIAL MEDIA USERS - A Study with reference to Virudhunagar Town

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Abstract

Social media is rapidly changing from a completely text-based medium in its early days to increasingly seek and use photos, audio, and video. In today's world irrespective of physical location, by using social media one can get tremendous information and communicate with almost anybody around the world. In this study it has been studied about the purposes and frequency of use, commonly used social networking sites. The primary data has been collected with the help of a sample survey of 150 Students of Arts and Science colleges in the Virudhunagar town. It has been found that the benefits that the college students had gained as a result of their social media use had obtained the total scores as: Posting / Viewing Photos and Videos 151 Scores and Browsing for networks relating to education contents 150 Scores. It has been concluded that the students have to make sure that the social media they use is not getting in the way of their daily activities and communication.

Keywords: Social Media, College Students

Introduction

In today's world irrespective of physical location, by using social media one can get tremendous information and communicate with almost anybody around the world. Initially, social interactions were limited to in-person meetings, then mail and letters, then telephones, then email, and now "social media", or web-based social interactions. Social media is rapidly changing from a completely text-based medium in its early days to increasingly seek and use photos, audio, and video. Consumers shop on Amazon, consult with a business mentor via Skype, log into secure page to e-mail their doctor with a question, check a mobile app to request a book from the library, and see if their prescription is ready at the pharmacy.

Nearly every business and organization with which every consumer interacts in the real world has a social media presence to provide additional on-demand content, help, and connection. Internet user base in India has been steadily increasing. Over 429 million internet users indicate penetration of Internet among 34% of Indian population. There are more than one billion mobile connections in India which means healthy mobile penetration among the population. There is a welcome trend that as many as 52% of Internet users are on social

media. In 2019, it is estimated that there will be around 258.27 million social network users in India, up from close to 168 million in 2016. Facebook is the most widely used social media platform with 215 million users in India at the end of March, 2018. India has over 37 million users on LinkedIn, with many people using the site to progress in their careers. Twitter usage is rising in India, with around 23 million current active users – a number that is expected to grow to almost 35 million by 2019.

Statement of the Problem

The main aim of the students is to have an optimal learning process. This process is more often endangered when students get entrapped by the ploys of social networking. Students overlook their studies by spending time on social networking websites rather than studying. Active participation in social networking can harmfully affect their marks or fetter their journeys to their future careers. The present paper focuses on the role of social media in the learning process of the students.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the Study.

- To study the awareness and use of social networking sites among college students.
- To find out the purposes and frequency of use, commonly used social networking sites.
- To ascertain opinion about use of social networking sites among students.

Research Methodology

The present study is mainly based on primary data. The primary data has been collected with the help of a sample survey of Students of Arts and Science colleges in the study area. A Pilot study was made using the interview schedule covering 15 students of Arts and Science colleges in the study area and the standard deviation was computed.

The confidence interval approach is used to determine the sample size for the survey. This approach states that the sample size increases with an increase in the population variability, degree of confidence and the precision level required of the estimate. The formula used for determining the sample size is given below.

$$\sigma^2 z^2$$

$$\text{Sample size} = n = \frac{\sigma^2 z^2}{D^2}$$

$$D^2$$

Where σ = Standard Deviation of the population. Here, in the case of Students, as the population is very large, it was estimated on the basis of the pilot study and was found to be 32.

Z = value associated with the confidence level. Here, the confidence level is taken as 95%. The associated Z value for a 95% confidence level is 1.96.

D = the level of precision, which is taken as 5.

Thus, sample size

$$\frac{(32)^2 (1.96)^2}{5^2} = 3933.7984$$

$$\text{For Consumers} = \frac{3933.7984}{25} = 157.351936 = 150$$

Having determined the sample size, proportionate stratified random sampling was used for selection of samples. The sample size covered 150 students who are spread through three different Arts and Science colleges in Virudhunagar town.

Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar's Senthikumara Nadar College (VHNSN), Virudhunagar was established in 1947. It has attained an eminent status with 18 UG, 15 PG, 13 M.Phil Programmes and 10 research departments in various disciplines with 3718 students in 2017-18. Having started with a meagre strength in 1962, V.V.Vanniaperumal College for Women has grown by leaps and bounds into one of the reputed women's colleges in Tamilnadu. The college has strength of 4117 students. Sri Vidhya College of Arts and Science, commenced in 2017, have strength 500 students.

150 Students have been selected from these colleges on the basis of the proportionate share of Students of each college which is given in the following table.

S.No	College	No. of Students	Share in %	No. of Students taken as samples
1	Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar's Senthikumara Nadar College	3718	44.60	67
2	V.V.Vanniaperumal College for Women	4117	49.40	74

3	Sri Vidhya College of Arts and Science	500	6.00	9
TOTAL		8335	100	150

Thus, the sample size for the survey of students was 150. Each respondent was contacted to collect information regarding the use of social media at the time of the survey.

Main Findings of the Study

There are many social networking sites which are popularly used by the students. Table-1 shows the commonly used social media platforms by the students. It was revealed that Instagram was used by as many as 25% of the students, closely followed by YouTube by about 23% of the students. The other popular social media used by students would include: Facebook (18%), Twitter (18%), and LinkedIn (16%).

Table -1: Commonly-Used Social Media Platforms

Social media used	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	27	18.00
Twitter	27	18.00
Instagram	38	25.33
YouTube	34	22.67
LinkedIn	24	16.00
	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from the analysis that most commonly used social networking sites among students are Instagram and YouTube in that order. “With the growing popularity of smart phones, one is addicted to the Internet – Facebook, Twitter and other such applications. These can cause insomnia, fragmented sleep.”(The Hindu, New Delhi, August 4, 2018). About 55% of the students spent 4-6 hours a day on social media and 12% of the students spent more than 6 hours a day on social media. Social media was used 2-4 hours a day by about 23% of the students and 1-2 hours a day by 10% of the students.

Table – II: Time Spent Per Day on Social Media

Time spent	Frequency	Percentage
1-2 hours	15	10.00
2-4 hours	35	23.33
4-6 hours	82	54.67
More than 6 hours	18	12.00
	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Social media platforms are used for various purposes. The purpose was study related in about 45% of cases. The purpose was ‘time passing’ in the case of 32% of students. Sharing articles was the purpose for 16% of the students. About 7% of the students had used the social media for publishing articles.

Table – III: Purpose of using Social Media

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Study related	68	45.33
Time passing	48	32.00
Sharing articles	24	16.00
Publishing articles	10	6.67
	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

To test whether there exists any relationship between the age of the college students and their preference for social media, Chi-square test is used.

H_0 : There exists no relationship between the age of the college students and their preference for social media

Observed frequency (O)

Social media	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn	Total
Age (in years)						
17-20	8	8	26	19	7	68
20-23	8	14	7	10	11	50
23-26	11	5	5	5	6	32
Total	27	27	38	34	24	150

Source: Primary Data**Expected frequency (E)**

Social media	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn	Total
Age (in years)						
17-20	12.24	12.24	17.23	15.41	10.88	68
20-23	9	9	12.67	11.33	8	50
23-26	5.76	5.76	8.11	7.25	5.12	32
Total	27	27	38	34	24	150

Source: Computed Data**Chi square**

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)²	(O-E)²/E
8	12.24	-4.24	17.98	1.47
8	12.24	-4.24	17.98	1.47
26	17.23	8.77	76.91	4.46
19	15.41	3.59	12.89	0.84
7	10.88	-3.88	15.05	1.38
8	9	-1	1	0.11
14	9	5	25	2.78
7	12.67	-5.67	32.15	2.54
10	11.33	-1.33	1.77	0.16
11	8	3	9	1.13
11	5.76	5.24	27.46	4.77
5	5.76	-0.76	0.58	0.10
5	8.11	-3.11	9.67	1.19
5	7.25	-2.25	5.06	0.70
6	5.12	0.88	0.77	0.15
X²				23.25

Source: Computed Data

$$X^2 = \sum (O-E)^2 / E = 23.55$$

$$\text{Degrees of freedom} = (c-1)(r-1)$$

$$= (5-1)(3-1)$$

$$= 4 \times 2$$

$$= 8$$

For 8 d.f. at 5% level of significance, the table value of Chi-square is = 15.507.

The calculated value of Chi-square is 23.25. From the table, the value of Chi-square level for 8 degrees of freedom is 15.507. The calculated value is higher than the table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that the variable age of the college students and their preference for social media are statistically significant and the factors are dependent.

The perception of the college students under study regarding the use of social media has been analysed with the help of a scaling technique. For this purpose, the opinion of the college students on six given uses has been extracted on a five-point scale. The weightage given for each opinion is: 'Strongly Agree' (2 Points), 'Agree' (1 Point), 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' (0 Point), 'Disagree' (-1 Point), and 'Strongly Disagree' (-2 Points). By consolidating the scores obtained by every sample student for each use with the help of the five point scale, the total scores have been computed. The results are given in the following table.

TABLE – IV: Perception about Use of Social Media

Used for	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total Scores
	No.	Points	No.	Points	No.	Points	No.	Points	No.	Points	
Posting / Viewing Photos and Videos	43	86	78	78	21	0	3	-3	5	-10	151
Browsing for networks relating to education contents	38	76	74	74	38	0	0	0	0	0	150
Chatting	44	88	70	70	22	0	14	-14	0	0	144
Downloading / Uploading Music and videos	49	98	63	63	19	0	19	-19	0	0	142
Updating a Status / Getting Updates	25	50	54	54	45	0	20	-20	6	-12	72
Playing Games	20	40	45	45	38	0	30	-30	17	-34	21

Source: Primary Data

The benefits that the college students had gained as a result of their social media use had obtained the total scores as: Posting / Viewing Photos and Videos (151 Scores), Browsing for networks relating to education contents (150 Scores), Chatting (144 Scores), Downloading / Uploading Music and videos (142 Scores), Updating a Status / Getting Updates (72 Scores), and Playing Games (21 Scores).

Conclusion

Social media has become so important that it is almost impossible to stay away from it. The students have to just monitor their use. The students have to make sure that the social media they use is not getting in the way of their daily activities and communication.

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