

Social Media Usage among University Students: A study in Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU), India

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Abstract

Study was conducted at the Acharya Nagarjuna University in Andhra Pradesh state (it was bifurcated recently), India to determine the actual purpose of using social media, such as educational, needs and for how much time students actively use social media. Study says that most of the students (54 per cent) use these networks for upgrading information and for cognitive needs such as increasing knowledge, information and understanding. Half of the sampled population use social media for sharing thoughts, ideas, opinions and study material. Students (37.6 per cent) in the campus are using social media for effective needs such as emotions, pleasure and feelings and social interactive needs such as chatting. More number of students usually spends one hour time with social networking sites per week. Least number of the students is spending above five hours in a week on social media.

Key word: Social interaction, Shared awareness, cognitive needs, Effective needs, Personal integrating needs, Social interactive needs, Tension release needs Personal relations,

Introduction

Social media networking sites are giving birth to a new way of learning and thinking, with unprecedented opportunities for establishing relationships and building fellowship. Social Media are the platform for social interaction as man is social animal and he needs to interact

with fellow human beings. Social technologies are also emerging to link people and stay with them. The use of social media in educational settings can help learning to become easy and quick. Social media can enhance learning and, if not properly used, impede as well.

Educational use of social media:

The social media show value in educational settings as long as they are used prudently. Atul Pant (2013) observed that “the conversation collaboration, coherence, global reach, scalability and low-cost dimensions that social media offer can be a boon for meaningful, effective and engaging education for all, provided they are used prudently”. In education institutions, personal interactions are also vital to creating and sustaining a sense of belonging. Mark Connolly (2011) suggests the additional benefit of social media: “establishing enduring relationships with real people. For example, connecting with fellow dorm residents through Facebook can help a student overcome the kind of isolation that otherwise might lead her to leave school/college. A Twitter account can provide a shy student with information about events that facilitate face-to-face encounters with other students. These relationships can be fostered on the community level too. For example, Chicago’s DePaul University sponsors a “This is DePaul” contest for students to contribute short YouTube videos that best capture the DePaul experience”.

The democratizing potentiality and power of freedom of speech of this medium is now being recognized by the governments across the world. For this, social networking sites also can help students develop leadership skills, from

low-level planning and organizing to activities that promote social change and democratic engagement. Social media create ‘Shared awareness’ among students and can be used for mass mobilization for social cause which in turn paves the way to political debate.

Literature reviewed

According to Waqas Tariq, *et al* (2012) the impact of social websites can be good on students but if we take a closer look at the real impact of social networks. Today social media are ruining the future and carrier of students. The social networking websites like linkedin.com, facebook.com, twitter.com and orkut.com etc. are continuously distracting students from their studies. The main focus of a student should be education but unfortunately today’s students are emphasizing on such sites which can be a complete wastage of time. Social Networks were only an electronic connection between users but unfortunately they have become an addiction for students, teenagers and even adults.

University of New Hampshire Research Team conducted study of social networking and grades among college students and defined Light User, Heavy User and social media. They “defined light users of social media as usage fewer than 31 minutes per day. Heavy usage was defined as usage exceeding 61 minutes per day. Researchers defined high grades as

A s, and A s and B s and lower grades as B s and lower. For the purpose of the study, social media (online networks) was defined as Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn” (Chuck Martin, *et al.* 2013).

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation method, sample size, tool, validity, background and limitations will be addressed in this section. The study was conducted in the month of October 2012.

Method: The evaluation consists of quantitative assessment relying on ANU students’ usage of SNS through a questionnaire distributed in the method of survey research design. Survey depends upon sampling i.e. (i) number of people chosen for the study (ii) their representativeness character, and (iii) reliability of the information given by them. The survey was administered by a

student led by the author. Survey or field research means an information gathering about a large number of people by interviewing a few of them.

Sample: Simple random sampling method was adopted to select the people in the campus. A total of 300 students from all six colleges in the university (College of Arts, Commerce and Law, College of Sciences, College of Sports, College of Architecture, College of Engineering and College of Pharmacy) were surveyed. Among 300 samples, 50 students were selected from each college and again in categories of gender: 25 male and 25 female. Study was conducted to investigate the usage of social networking sites by the sampled population of three Post Graduate colleges (Colleges of Arts, Sciences and Sports) and three Under Graduate colleges (Colleges of Architecture, Engineering, Pharmacy) see table: 1.

Sample selection among the students in the University

Table: 1

S. No.	Grade	Name of the College	Male	Female	Total sample
1	Post Graduate	College of Arts, Commerce & Law	25	25	50
2		College of Science	25	25	50
3		College of Sports	25	25	50
4	Under Graduate	College of Engineering	25	25	50
5		College of Architecture	25	25	50
6		College of Pharmacy	25	25	50
Total	2 Levels	6 Colleges	150	150	300

Tool: The written ‘Social Media User Questionnaire’ was composed of Likert-scale questions with 3-point preference scale (yes, No, Cant’ say), multiple choice questions and open questions. Forty one questions in the questionnaire can be grouped into the following categories: Utilization of SNS, Accessibility, Novelty, Knowledge in using SNS, Impact of social media on students, Place and Time of using SNS and Others.

Validity: The questionnaire has been developed on the field experience and with the help of principal researchers to collect the data. The questions on the instrument were designed to satisfy the research questions as set forth in the introduction of this study. Therefore, the questionnaire was considered to have content validity.

Background of the study: To see the geographical area, the Acharya Nagarjuna University is a state university spread over

about 300 acres of land on the national highway (NH-5) between two cities of Guntur and Vijayawada in costal Andhra region of united Andhra Pradesh. Internet centre was provided with multiple systems in a specially designed building in the university campus for the benefit of students and faculty as well. University has admitted more than three thousand students in six colleges most of them from rural background. The Acharya Nagarjuna University is one of the fastest expanding universities in Andhra Pradesh, in its academic activities: teaching, research and extension services with infrastructural facilities of newly constructed buildings.

Evaluation Analysis and major findings

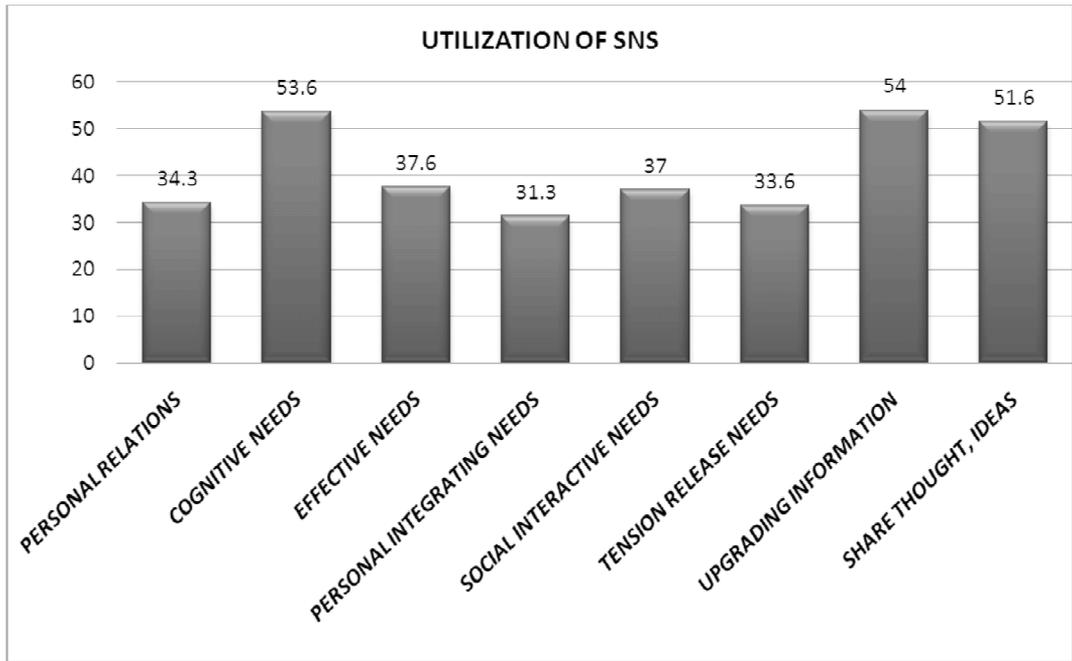
The evaluation analysis and main findings are addressed in this section. The questionnaire was summarized in Tables 2-14 and Figures 1-2.

Utilization of social networking sites for various needs

Table: 2

S. No	Utilization of Social Networking Sights	Per cent	Rank
1	Maintain personal relations	34.3	6
2	Cognitive needs (such as knowledge, information, and understanding)	53.6	2
3	Effective needs (such as emotions, pleasure and feelings)	37.6	4
4	Personal integrating needs (such as credibility, stability and status)	31.3	8
5	Social interactive needs (such as chatting)	37.0	5
6	Tension release needs (such as escape and diversion)	33.6	7
7	Upgrading Information	54.0	1
8	Share Thought/Ideas/ Study Material, Articles/Opinions	51.6	3

Figure: 1



Reasons for using social media networks

The majority of students (54 percent) use these networks for upgrading information, 53.6 per cent use social media for cognitive needs such as knowledge, information and understanding and 51.6 per cent to share thoughts, ideas, study material/articles and opinions.

About 37.6 percent of the students in the campus are using social media for effective needs such as emotions, pleasure and feelings and 37 per cent are for social interactive needs such as chatting.

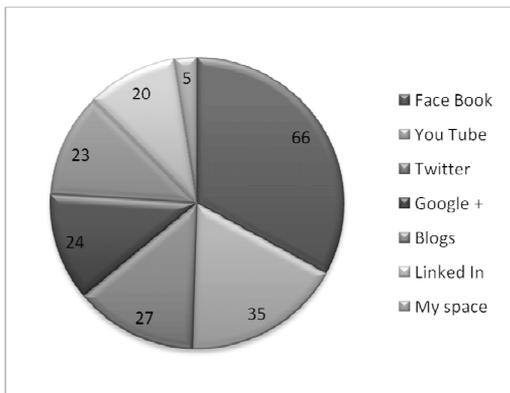
Whereas, 34.3 per cent of the students use social media for maintaining personal relations, 33.6 per cent of respondents are using social networking sites for tension release needs such as escape and diversion and 31.3 per cent are using for personal integrating needs such as credibility, stability and status

Social Networking Sites, Students use more

Table: 3

S. No	Social Networking Site	Per cent	Rank
1	Facebook	66	1
2	YouTube	35	2
3	Twitter	27	3
4	Google +	24	4
5	Blogs	23	5
6	Linked In	20	6
7	My space	05	7
8	Others	00	0

Figure 2



The study found that the most popular online network was Facebook, with 66 per cent of all university students saying they use it on a typical day. The least used social media platform was Myspace, with 5 per cent of students using it daily.

Number of social media accounts students is having

Table: 4

No	Number of SM accounts	Per cent
1	1-2	60
2	2-4	31
3	5>	09

In highest number, 60 per cent of the students in ANU were having one or two accounts in social media. When 31 per cent of the students were having two to four accounts, only 9 per cent were having more than five social media accounts.

Number of social media friends

Table: 5

S. No	Number of SM friends	Per cent
1	0-20	51.6
2	20-99	24.6
3	100>	23.6

The study says that 51.6 per cent of the students were having up to twenty social media friends. 24.6 per cent of the students were connected by up to ninety nine friends. 23.6 per cent of the students had more than hundred social media friends.

Novelty of social networking sites

Table: 6

S. No	Feel novelty in using SNS	Per cent
1	Feel it is a new idea to have interaction with friends who are in far off distance	64
2	Using SN sites as a novel platform for finding new friends	47

64 per cent of the respondents felt SN sites are a new idea to have interaction with friends who are in far off distance. 47 of the students are using SN sites as a novel platform for finding new friends.

Operating skills in using social networking sites

Table: 7

S. No	Knowledge in using Social Networking Sites	Per cent	Rank
1	Know how to see Notifications, Friend requests, Messages	61	1
2	Know how to search and recognize new online friends	60	2
3	Have an idea about status, post, likes, comments in face book and other sites	57	3
4	Have an idea about opening, watch videos in YouTube	56	4
5	Know in fallowing eminent persons in twitter	27	5
6	Have the knowledge about Google plus	25	6
7	Know operating and writing blog or blogosphere	23	7

Most of the students (61 per cent) know how to see notifications, friend requests and messages. 60 per cent of respondents know how to search new friends in facebook. 59 per cent of students know how to recognize online friends. 57 per cent of the respondents have an idea about status, post, likes, and comments in Facebook. 56 per cent of the ANU students have an idea about have to open and watch videos in YouTube.

Only 27 per cent of students are following eminent persons in twitter and 25 per cent of students have the knowledge of Google Puls. Whereas, only 23 per cent of respondents have knew about operating and writing blogs.

Impact of social networking sites on users

Table: 8

S. No	Impact on users	Per cent
1	Feel SN Sites give positive impact on the students	49
2	Find change in behavior/Attitude in life after using SN sites	43
3	Feel that the level of knowledge has increased by using SN sites	61
4	Feel that the information in SN sites is useful	62

Social Networking Sites put positive impact on the students (49 per cent) and it was found in the study that there is a change in behavior and attitude in the students' life (43 per cent) after using SN sites. Students (61 per cent)

feel that their level of knowledge has increased by using social media and also they (62 per cent) think that the information they get in SN Sites is very much useful to their studies.

Place of using social networking sites

Table: 9

S. No	Place and Time of using Social Media	Per cent
1	Most of the time use social networking in educational institute	39
2	Most of the time use social networking in cyber café	18
3	Most of the time use social networking in home	32
4	Most of the time use social networking in mobile	43

Most of the students (43 per cent) are using social networking sites in their mobiles phones. Next priority is Educational institutes and internet centre on the campus were used by students (39 per cent) for social media. Only 18 per cent of the respondents were using social media in cyber cafes outside the campus.

Feasible time for browsing social media

Table: 10

S. No	Browsing time	Per cent
1	Morning	18
2	Afternoon	29
3	Evening	47
4	Night	06

Most of the students (47 per cent) were using social media in the evening time and least (6 per cent) in the night.

Frequency of usage of social networking Sites

Table: 11

S. No	Frequency	Per cent
1	Every day	34.6
2	Twice in a week	27.6
3	Once in a week	37.6

When 37.6 per cent of students browse social media sites only once in a week, 34.6 per cent use every day but 27.6 per cent open twice in a week.

Browsing time spent on social media per week

Table: 12

S. No	Time	Per cent
1	One hour	54
2	1-5 hours	32
3	Above 5 hours	11

More number of students (54 per cent) usually spends one hour time with social networking sites per week. Least number of the students (11 percent) is spend above five hours in a week.

Accessibility with computer

Table: 13

S. No	Accessibility with computer	Per cent
1	Have personal computers	39
2	Have knowledge in operating computer	91
3	Have special trained in operating computer	50

Only 39 per cent of the students have their own computers. 91 per cent of the students in university have the knowledge of operating computers. 50 per cent of the sampled students are trained in operating computer.

Students using social media in religion wise

Table: 14

S. No	Religion	Percent
1	Hindu	72.3
2	Christian	18.3
3	Muslims	9.4

Most of the Hindu community students (72.3 per cent) were using social media sites; followed by Christian students with 18.3 per cent and Muslim students with 9.4 per cent in the campus.

Conclusion

Usage of social networking sites by the post graduate and graduate students in the Acharya Nagarjuna University is for multiple purposes. Students try to fulfill their basic needs through the social networking sites: cognitive needs (such as knowledge, information, and understanding), effective needs (such as emotions, pleasure and feelings), personal integrating needs (such as credibility, stability and status), social interactive needs (such as chatting) tension release needs (such as escape and diversion), maintain personal relations, upgrading of

information happens, thought/ideas/study material, articles/opinions sharing happens.

Students should be shown the value of reinvesting the time and effort saved by technology into higher-order tasks that really matter to their learning, such as writing a complex argument, reading difficult texts, and debating ideas with others. Students can develop a capacity for practical reasoning when using social media. Educators and students should have multiple, purposeful discussions. The

benefits of social media in education far outweigh the drawbacks and hence there is a need to integrate social media into the educational mix.

Suggestions: Teachers and parents can share their experience and success stories with suitable quotations from eminent thinkers and scriptures. It can help the students in setting their goals and moulding their career into a successful

path. Social media tools can also help the students better connect with parents, the local community, potential volunteers and supporters. Their accounts will become important resources they use to represent themselves to important people for important things. Basically, instead of forbidding their social media outlets, teachers and parents can hijack them for the greater good.

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