



AWARENESS AND OPINION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY THE STUDENTS OF ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

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Social networking sites provide an easy and inexpensive way to maintain education. However, students have to social networking site awareness due to the increasing number of actions on these platforms. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to investigate the awareness and opinion of social networking sites by the students of Alagappa University, Tamilnadu. Data were gathered from a representative sample of 226 students using structured questionnaires. According to the study, most students were aware of social networking sites and thought they were helpful for academic collaboration.

Keywords: *Internet, Social Networking Sites, WWW, Social Web, Communication.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The World Wide Web's (WWW) advancements have fundamentally altered how individuals interact with one another and obtain information. The development of the Web has led to the emergence of a group of technologies known as Web 2.0. (Madansing Dhondiram Golwal; Mr. Datta T. Kalbande, 2012). O'Reilly Media first used the term "Web 2.0" in 2004 to describe web applications that enable user-generated content sharing, social networking, online collaboration, participation, and engagement. These websites can be used to create user-generated content and communication-focused community-based personal websites, chat rooms, online discussion forums, and other social spaces. Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Orkut are examples.

Numerous tools and services, including texting, blogging, photo, audio, and video sharing, group discussions, and application distribution, are available on social networking sites. Young people are the main consumers of these websites, particularly students. Social networking platforms allow students to interact with a wider audience and maintain contact with friends, teachers, and institutions. Students can create and share identities and profiles on these websites, which can include blogs, music videos, photos, and private information (Boyd, 2007; K & Sumitha, 2015). Students have the option to form groups and interact with both teachers and other students by offering comments on existing issues or presenting new ones in the hopes of sparking conversation. They can instantaneously and interactively share

information, trade files, and ask for and receive thoughts, suggestions, comments, and ideas. Social networking websites allow students all around the world to keep in touch with their classmates, family, and fellow students. These online communities offer students from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to connect. Ensuring the security and privacy of its users is one of social networking sites' top priorities. According to [Mariani & Wacas, \(2021\)](#) these sites allow users to share their personal information, such as their name, address, phone number, email address, and photos.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

[El-Berry, \(2015\)](#) explored the awareness and use of five famous academic social networking sites such as ResearchGate, Acedemia.edu, LinkedIn, Mendeley and Scholastica among South Valley University's academic staff. The investigator used on structured questionnaire that was sent to different categories of the South Valley University academics via email and Facebook. Data analysis revealed that most of the respondents were aware of and using the academic social networking sites. Finally, the investigator found that ResearchGate demonstrated the highest level of awareness and usage followed by LinkedIn, Acedemi.edu, Mendeley and Scholastica respectively.

[Suki et al., \(2016\)](#) investigated how normative and informational factors influence students' behaviour while engaging in electronic word of mouth via social networking sites (SNS). A structured questionnaire was distributed among 250 students at public institutions of higher education learning in the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia, using the convenience sampling technique. The study found a consistent relationship between normative influence and users' opinion seeking, giving, and passing while engaged in electronic word of mouth via social networking sites. Similarly, users' opinion seeking and asking were also influenced by informational factors. The study used the structural equation modelling (SEM) approach to obtain these empirical results.

[Akbari et al., \(2009\)](#) investigated the perceived value of social networks for language acquisition and the expectations around them. Twenty PhD students from Iran participated in the study. They used Facebook to sign up for an online English course. The study utilized questionnaires to investigate the students' attitudes towards using social networks in language learning. The results demonstrated that the participants' sentiments before and after the course differed significantly. Prior to the course, the vast majority of participants thought Facebook was a good platform for communication and information sharing. However, the majority of students said that Facebook has a lot of potential to be a useful formal teaching

medium after the course. At the end of the course, every participant agreed that using social networks for language learning can be effective and could result in satisfactory linguistic outcomes. The post-course questionnaires revealed that student' views regarding the value of social networks were becoming more positive, which was indicative of this.

3. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites (SNS) are online environments in which students use educational content and then make links with other colleagues they know on the site ([Tuunainen et al., 2009](#)). According to [Jordan, \(2014\)](#) academics are most conversant with generic social networking sites for example Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Especially ([Boyd, 2007](#)) In 2005, young people in the United States started frequenting online social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Young people were signing up, making intricate profiles, openly expressing their ties with other participants, and exchanging long, detailed remarks with each other across the nation. As early as 2006, a lot of people believed that using the popular social networking site MySpace was necessary to be popular in school. Social networking sites are not used by all teenagers, but in a short amount of time, they became very popular among American teenagers. These websites still play a major role in teens' social lives, even if their attraction has subsequently diminished and they are no longer nearly as fascinated with them as they once were. Even though specific systems may come and go, the ways that young people co-operate on social media sites nowadays offer enduring insights into the processes of identity construction, status bargaining, and peer-to-peer social interaction.

4. ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The use of social networks to maintain relationships with friends, family, and peers is known as social networking. It now ranks among the most essential aspects of our modern existence. Social networking platforms facilitate information sharing and communication between users ([Ball, 2015](#)), regardless of their location. It is an admirable tool for maintaining long-distance relationships between teachers and students. It helps to facilitate the exchange of educational information between them, even if they are separated by great distances. With the help of modern communication tools, such as mobile campaigns and computers ([Bhatt & Kumar, 2014](#); [Obinyan, 2019](#)), it has become easier to connect with scholars and academic professionals from different parts of the world. Social networking websites, blogs, instant messengers, chat rooms, and dating websites are some of the available options to expand our social network ([Boyd, 2007](#); [K & Sumitha, 2015](#); [Obinyan,](#)

2019). Social network now plays a crucial role in both our personal and professional lives. But there are risks and disadvantages associated with it as well, like privacy issues and the potential for online learning. Notwithstanding these difficulties, social media is still a useful instrument for learning and communication.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A thorough literature analysis and a quantitative research approach were used to achieve the study's particular goals and overall goal. 666 students from various departments at Alagappa University made up the study's universe. Data from a representative sample of 238 students and research based on [K & Sumitha, \(2015\)](#) were gathered using structured questionnaires. A total of 226 completed surveys were returned, yielding a 95 per cent response rate overall. Standard statistical techniques were employed to examine the data and draw conclusions.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1. Awareness of social networking platforms

Social networking, also known as web-based social networking, is a novel kind of online communication. It is an interactive method of communication between individuals, groups of individuals, or organisations. Table 1 summarises the students' responses when they were asked if they were aware of social networking sites. According to the analysis, the majority of pupils (87.2%) knew about YouTube and Orkut (73.5%). Of the students, 53.1% or more were aware of blogs. A sizable portion of the pupils (45.1%) and Hi-5 (40.7%) knew what Facebook and Hi-5 were. Just 3.6% of students knew about MySpace, compared to only 17.3% of students who knew about Classmate.com, 12% of students about Friendster, and 7.5 percent of students about Bebo. Merely 5% of the pupils possessed knowledge of websites such as Flickr (5%), Twitter (5%), and LinkedIn (4%).

Table-1: Awareness among students about social networking sites

Sns	Count of Responses (N=226)
Orkut	197 (87.2%)
MySpace	76 (33.6%)
Facebook	102 (45.1%)
Friendster	27 (12%)
Hi-5	92 (40.7%)
Flickr	11 (5%)
Blog	120 (53.1%)
YouTube	166 (73.5%)
Classmate.com	39 (17.3%)
Bebo	17 (7.5%)
LinkedIn	9 (4%)
Twitter	5 (2.2%)

Most of the students had heard of at least one social networking site. Among students, Orkut is more popular than MySpace and Facebook. Asians make up the majority of Orkut's user base, and it is owned and run by Google. These could be the causes of Orkut's rising popularity among students. Orkut is more widely used in Brazil and India ([Boyd, 2007](#)). However, students in advanced countries like the United States and the United Kingdom are more likely to use Facebook. According to recent research, Facebook ranks as the second most popular website globally, and its popularity is expanding faster in India.

6.2. Opinion about social networking sites

Social networking platforms are utilised by students for many objectives. They were urged to provide their thoughts on social networking platforms (Table 2).

Table-2: Opinion about social networking sites

Opinion about social networking sites	No. of Responses (N=226)
Helpful for easy communication	172 (76.1%)
Easy for communicating with many	161 (71.2%)
Easy for contacting old and new friends	114 (50.4%)
Useful for academic communication	186 (82.3%)

The majority of students 82.3% thought that social networking sites could be helpful for academic collaboration. Of the students, about half (50.4%) think that these sites make it simple to get in touch with friends, both old and new, and that they are useful for simple communication (76.1%). Seventy-one per cent of students believe that connecting with many people is simple ([Akbari et al., 2009](#)).

7. CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the majority of students are aware of social networking sites and find them useful for communicating with one another in the classroom. The most popular social networking platform among Alagappa University students is Orkut. Companies that operate social networking websites must strengthen the security and privacy of their platforms. They ought to set up guidelines and plans for handling user data that is posted on their websites in an appropriate and secure manner. It is important to provide students with training and awareness initiatives that include the uses, advantages, and dangers of social networking sites. The purpose of this study was to find out what the participants thought and knew about social networking sites. Future research

concentrating on different aspects of social networking sites, particularly digital ethics with social networking sites, may be undertaken. Furthermore, the data for this study were only collected once as part of a survey. Previous studies have shown that when participants encountered the usage of SNS in their teaching and learning processes, their attitudes shifted. Consequently, it is advised to conduct a study with comparable subjects that use a pre-test and post-test strategy.

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