An Insight into the Benefits and Dangers of using Social Networking Sites

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Abstract

In the context of digitalization, social networks are the pulsating way to interact globally related to the user's interest. The increased growth of Information and Communication Technology to the modern societies through the social media reach is significant. The usage of social networking is highly different in that they are mainly concentrated on constant discussion with friends and family through various features such as games, status, and pictures. The study investigates the use of social networking sites with their purpose, dangers, and benefits as variables. The sample was collected from engineering students to find the difference among the category with related to the study variables. The study found that Engineering students are accepting that they are getting some benefits from SNS as well as they are confronting some dangers from using SNS. There is no difference in the perception of benefits and dangers of SNS with respect to gender and family income. However, there is a positive relationship between the variables.

1. Introduction

Therise of social networking sites changed the way people interact with one another, it's just a couple of decades when the first networking site came into existence where the users could create a profile and make friends of other users. Six degree is a social networking site introduced in the year 1997 which was active till 2001 followed by many social networking sites. At present, there are a hundred plus social networking sites, where millions of users are scattered among these cloud-based sites on their own requirement. The recent third-quarter survey by Statista 2017, has reported that the monthly active users of Facebook are at 2.07 billion followed by the YouTube with 1.50 billion. The usage of social networking is highly diverse that they are mainly focused on constantly pushing discussion with friends and family through various features such as games, status, pictures etc.

Table 1: Data by Statista 2017

SNS	No. of Monthly Active Users
Facebook	2.06
YouTube	1.50
WhatsApp	1.30
Facebook Messenger	1.30
WeChat	0.96
Instagram	0.70

The increased universal usage of smartphones and mobile gadgets has unlocked the prospects of social network usages. These sites enable the users to communicate and interact beyond boundaries. There are many purposes of visiting the social networking sites from the news updates till creating awareness for other users irrespective of geographic, demographic, psychographic variables. This creates comfort zone for the users also the dramatic rise in the fameprovides the marketers with more opportunities to use these sites as a better platform to communicate with the potential audience.

Apart from these arguments, SNS has become the communication platform for the students to connect with the friends and family. It also allows interaction with others through the medium of like-minded groups such as Social, Political,

Business, Academicsand Religion etc. this modern day interactive medium permits to share ideas, information, experiences along with the photographs and messages to friends or to the public.

The vibration of Information and Communication Technology to the modern societies through the social media reach is negligible. This expands the chance to interact with the people globally. SNS are gaining huge popularity which other media took years to reach the users. Radio and television took almost 38 years and 13 years to touch 50 million users and the internet took 4 years whereas the social networking site Facebook took 12 months to grasp 200 million users inside its boundary.

Like benefits, SNS also has a drawback which is the user's getting distracted on visiting the site and the purpose of active usage of SNS is thus not attained. This paper aims to bring out the difference in the opinions of the engineering students about the use of social networking site and the benefits and dangers associated with them.

2. Background of the Study

The social networking sites provide e-learning benefits in their courses for the majority of the students in Higher Education setting.(Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010).SNS helps the school and universities to complement formal education activities and to enhance learning. It allows to strengthen existing relationship and also to provide opportunities for building new relationship among new peoples social inclusion (Notley, 2009).

SNSs are potential players in web 2.0 in creating new space and process for socializing also impacting upon traditional social structures. The increased internet literacy ensures to understand and analyse media content and can minimize cyberbullying, Privacy etc.(Philippa Collin, Ms. Kitty Rahilly, Ingrid Richardson, & Amanda Third, 2011). A lot of stories about friends from social networks reports the reduced bonding and also the users who consume greater content from the sites have experienced the increased loneliness (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010).

criminal; the social factors shows that the major impact on the rumours to use social networking sites (C. M. K. Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). Social influence on SNS exhibits a strong effect on self-disclosure whereas perceived privacy risk doesn't impact the self-disclosure(C. Cheung et al., 2015). Compared with the grouping among younger and older students, students who are younger tend to use Facebook longer in constructing social connections than the older students. Older students by now they seem to have well-known friends and colleagues as compared to the younger students(Stollak, Matthew J. St. Vandenberg, Burklund, & Weiss, 2011)

Facebook discussions bring site familiarity and navigability; the students become better familiar with the classmates and learned more course material. Appropriate use of Facebook may increase student engagement in certain learning context (Hurt, Moss, Bradley, Larson, & Lovelace, 2012). There are challenges and opportunities faced by SNS usage in education which includes privacy, friendship, and miscommunication, on the other hand, it is convenient, flexible and accessible (Jalal & Zaidieh, 2012). The impersonal nature of these cloud environment facilitates the younger participants in negotiating the difficulties that arise offline by managing relationships (Dunne, Lawlor, Rowley, & Rowley, 2012). Facebook users have more close associations and get more social support than others; they are much more politically engaged than most people(Hampton, Goulet, Lee Rainie, & Kristen Purcell, 2011).

A study which compares faculty and student response in indicating the technology adoption shows that the student significantly access to social networks to support classroom work than the faculty members who are using traditional tech methods such as email(Roblyer, Mcdaniel, Webb, Herman, & Vince, 2010)

From the above discussion, it is identified that the social networking sites are being used by students for sharing classroom discussion, sending materials for learning etc. Every user's purpose is differing from one another, though the online social networks create a platform for making groups on an individual's taste, attitude, behaviour etc. the purpose visiting sites is either fulfilled or not. The benefits and dangers cost, with the usage among the students, were considered for the study.

Based on the above opinions, the following objective is framed

To study the purpose and perception of benefits and dangers of using social networking sites, the research hypotheses a healthy manner as follows,

H1: there is significant difference between the respondents' profile and the purpose of using SNS.

H2: there is a significant difference between the respondents' profile and the benefits of the SNS usage perception.

H3: there is a significant difference between the respondents' profile and the dangers of the SNS usage perception.

H3: there is a significant relationship between the variables.

3. Research Methodology:

Sample:

The study is conducted among undergraduate and postgraduate students of engineering colleges in Pondicherry. The respondents are selected using purposive sampling method. A valid survey instrument is used to collect the data and 116 samples are collected from 150 approached.

Measuring Instrument:

The structured questionnaire from previous studies was used to collect the data. The uses have Nigeria, sections. The initial section is dealt with the demographic profile of the respondents. The remaining section is dealt with the items to measure the purpose of SNS and the student's perception of benefits and dangers of SNS among engineering students from Pondicherry. The items are adopted from the cross-reference of the article (Eke, Charles Obiora Omekwu Prof, & Jennifer Nneka Odoh Miss, 2014).

Data Profile:

Table 2: Frequency Analysis of demographics of the respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	**Male**	**64**	**55.2**
	Female	524	4.8
	less than 20 years	52	44.8
Age	**More than 20 years**	**64**	**55.2**
Annual Income	Less than 50 thousand	17	14.7
	51 to 75 thousand	23	19.8
	76 to 1 Lakh	23	19.8
	More than 1 Lakh	**53**	**45.7**
Technology Owned	Computer	53	21.9
	Laptop/Tab	79	32.6
	Smart Phone	**102**	**42.1**
	Others	8	3.3
Place Where do you access SNS	**Home**	**104**	**53.9**
	College	44	22.8
	Internet café	18	9.3
	Others	27	14.0
Spending time on SNS	less than 1 hour	29	25.0
	1 to 2 hours	29	25.0
	2-3 hours	26	22.4
	3-4 hours	12	10.3
	More than 4 hours	**20**	**17.2**

Data Analysis:

Table 3: ANOVA Results for Perceptions about Purpose of using SNS

Purpose of using SNS		Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	F	Sig
Gender	Male	64	2.5922	.56409	.07051	1.112	.294
	Female	52	2.7154	.69434	.09629		
Age	Below 20	34	2.9500	.77391	.13272	12.345	.001
	Above 20	82	2.5220.	50797	.05610		
Family Income	less than 75 k	40	2.5775	.61163	.09671	.524	.593
	76 to 1 lakh	23	2.7435	.55171	.11504		
	above 1 lakh	53	2.6585	.67037	.09208		

From the above table, it, that Gender shows that there is no difference in the perception of the purpose of using SNS. The male and female are found to be similar in their thoughts about the purpose of social networking sites. But, the age category shows a significant difference in the perception, the students who are above 20 years (μ=2.5 and σ =0.50) have a difference with that of students who are less than 20 years (μ=2.9 and σ= 0.77). The difference is found to be statistically significant (F=12.34 & Sig=0.00). The Family income category shows no differences among the groups.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for Perceptions about Benefits of using SNS

Benefits of SNS		Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	F	Sig
Gender	Male	64	2.4442	.56751	.07094	.365	.547
	Female	52	2.3681	.78723	.10917		
Age	Below 20	34	2.5462	.79848	.13694	1.985	.162
	Above 20	82	2.3537	.60991	.06735		
Family Income	less than 75 k	40	2.5214	.64827	.10250	1.173	.313
	76 to 1 lakh	23	2.4472	.74394	.15512		
	above 1 lakh	53	2.3100	.65689	.09023		

The above table 4 is evident that the gender, age, and family income do not have statistically significant differences among their groups with respect to the benefits associated with the usage of social networking sites.

Table 5: ANOVA Results for Perceptions about Dangers of using SNS

Dangers of SNS		Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	F	Sig
Gender	Male	64	2.1992	.65037	.08130	2.274	.134
	Female	52	2.0096	.70095	.09720		
Age	Below 20	34	2.3125	.83612	.14339	4.239	.042
	Above 20	82	2.0320	.58558	.06467		
Family Income	less than 75 k	40	2.2500	.69338	.10963	1.474	.233
	76 to 1 lakh	23	1.9620	.68510	.14285		
	above 1 lakh	53	2.0778	.65515	.08999		

From the above table 5, it is inferred that Gender and Family income shows that there is no difference among their groups in the perception about the purpose of using SNS. The age category shows a significant difference in the perception, the students who are above 20 years (μ=2.0 and σ =0.58) have a difference with the students who are less than 20 years (μ=2.3 and σ= 0.83). The difference is found to be statistically significant (F=4.23 & Sig=0.04).

Table 6: Correlation among Purpose, Benefits, and dangers of SNSs

	Benefits	Dangers	Purpose
Benefits	1		
Dangers	.204[*]	1	
Purpose	**.380**[**]	**.315**[**]	1
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The purpose of using SNS is seen to have a positive significant relationship, the degree to which the purpose have with that of Benefits of 38% and Dangers of 31%.

Table 7: Mean Analysis of the Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Benefits of using SNS	2.4101	.67284	116
Dangers of using SNS	2.1142	.67718	116
Purpose of using SNS	2.6474	.62602	116

The mean value of the variables shows that the respondents say that the dangers of using SNS are more than the Purpose and Benefits of using SNS.

4. Findings:

Table 8: Hypotheses Decision

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Decision
H1	*Purpose of using SNS*	Gender, **Age**, Family Income	Partially Accepted
H2	*Benefits of using SNS*	Gender, Age, Family Income	Rejected
H3	*Dangers of using SNS*	Gender, **Age**, Family Income	Partially Accepted
H4	*Relationship between the variables*		Positive Relationship

The table shows the existence of difference among the independent and dependent variables partially. The gender has similar perception of thoughts considering the purpose, benefits, and dangers of using the social networking sites. Among the male and female categories, there is no difference among the variables. Whereas among the age category, there exists a difference in opinion with respect to the purpose of using SNS and the Dangers associated with the usage of SNSs. Which is evident for the partial support for the hypotheses (H1 and H3). The Benefits of using SNS doesn't have any difference among the independent variables such as Gender, Age, and Family Income, Hence the Hypothesis (H2) is rejected. The correlation was run to find out the direction of the relationship and degree to which it is correlated which shows that among the variables there occur a positive moderate relationship.

5. Discussion:

The study reveals that the benefits associated with the social networking sites are common irrespective of demographics whereas the purpose and dangers differ with respect to the age. The results obtained from the study shows that the undergraduate students and post-graduate students of engineering reveal that more than the purpose and benefits associated with the usage of social networking, the dangers have higher mean value. It represents that students

irrespective of profile category states there is a higher range of dangers. From the findings it is proof that social networking sites are a source of mobilizing vast amount of information.

The respondent's responses reflect that both male and female students are same in their thoughts about the purposes, benefits, and dangers of social networking sites. The perceptions about the purposes of using SNS is differing based on their age, which is logically accepted. All age categories are saying that they are getting the same level of benefits by using social networking sites but interestingly, they are differing in the number of problems facing through social networking sites. Specifically engineering students over 20 years understand that they are facing more problems by using some social network sites. Perceptions about purposes of social networking sites and benefits reaped are same among the engineering students with irrespective of their family income. The study confirms that the dangers level or amount of dangers from social networking sites are higher than the number of benefits from using social networking sites

6. Conclusion:

Social networking site is the best way to communicate with the people all around the world with the related interest and goals. It's more like virtual hangout places for the cyber users. There is a higher level of benefits and dangers associated with using the social networking sites. The benefits include the online learning enabled through social media have direct manner on economic features. (Notley, 2009) also, it helps in developing the interpersonal relationship, self-identity, and self-expression (Eke et al., 2014). The dangers associated with social networking sites are leakage of information, the unwanted spread of rumours etc. since the users can upload any kind of videos without copyrights. It is an easily available platform to share information which doesn't have control. Even with the high level of privacy setting of the users, the information's can be leaked, stole by the friends and passed over the cloud which will lead to unnecessary revenge, blackmailing, and criminal activities.

Here we conclude that there exists a partial proof to study variables. There should be a control over the use of SNS, the students should be educated about the benefits, dangers of using the online environment for making friends and sharing thoughts in a healthy manner. The proper guidance and ethical formats should be followed by the users to ensure the higher security to have control over the unwanted sharing of information. The cyber literacy should be ensured to know the information sent online is stored in the cloud and can be having a higher risk.

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