



USAGE OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS AT HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL

Education

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to find the usage of online social networks and its influence on social competence among students at higher secondary level. 1000 higher secondary school students were selected as samples. Survey method was used. The study revealed that majority of students are users of online social networks and it has great influence on their social competence. Also the students having high social network usage have less social competence.

KEYWORDS

online social networks, social competence, higher secondary level students

1. Introduction

“Social Networking Sites are web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, to articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and to view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” Boyd (2007). Online Social networking has evolved as a great medium to connect with like-minded individuals and has become a part of interesting groups and communities. It has become our means to stay connected with friends and family, and stay in touch with the latest happenings in the world. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Whatsapp and LinkedIn are online communities that allow members to construct and broadcast their information, interact with others through ways such as sharing photos and videos, sending public and personal messages and playing games.

Online Social networking is a type of virtual communication that enables people to connect with each other. It took 38 years to attract 50 million listeners to wireless radio system, 13 years for the television to attract 50 million viewers; in 4 years the internet has attracted 50 million surfers. iPods took 3 years to reach 50 million users, but Facebook, one of the leading social networking sites, had over 200 million users in just 12 months. This shows the penetration capacity and popularity of social networking sites. It serves as a platform and forum for the common man to share information, post their opinions and promote campaigns (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009).

Addiction to social networking has affected significantly students' lives leading to consistent practices that corrupt their minds. Instead of studying, playing and learning new techniques, most students will spend their time for chatting with friends on social media. Moreover, students tend to neglect their duties to talk with their friends and family members. The habit of interacting through electronic means makes it harder to interact with people face to face. They communicate through the social media but are poor communicators in the real world which means the social competence become less.

Social Competence is popularly understood as “being able to get along with other people”. It involves the ability to establish, maintain and develop constructive social relationships with other people, in working contexts and in our own personal lives. The effectiveness of social behavior can be determined within the context of a particular social environment including communities, peer groups, families and cultures (Argyle, 1994). Social competence is the condition of possessing the social, emotional, and intellectual skills and behaviours needed to succeed as a member of society (Davidson, Welsh and Bierman, 2005). The success of an individual in the society depends largely upon the extent to which he has acquired the richness and potency of social competence desirable for his/her self-actualization, growth and development. It is acquired through social interaction and culture integration in different socio-cultural settings (Sharma, Shukla and Shukla, 1992).

2. Significance of the study

Usage of Social Networking Sites might have great influence on the development social competence of students. Present day students are widely using modern Social Networking Sites for their own communication and interaction. Hence, it becomes crucial to analyze the influence of social networking sites on adolescents. Therefore the present study has been proposed as a pioneering attempt to understand the influence of online social networks on social competence of students at higher secondary level.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To identify the users and non users of online social networks among students at higher secondary level
2. To find out the extent of usage of online social networks among students at higher secondary level.
3. To find out the level of Social competence among students at higher secondary level.
4. To compare the social competence of users and non users of online social networks among students at higher secondary level.
5. To compare the Social competence of students having high, average and low online social network usage.

4. Hypotheses of the study

- H1:** There are users and non users of online social networks among students at higher secondary level.
- H2:** Usage of online social networks is moderate among students at higher secondary level.
- H3:** Students at higher secondary level have moderate social competence.
- H4:** There exists significant difference in the social competence of users and non users of online social networks among students at higher secondary level.
- H5:** There exists significant difference in the Social competence of students having high, average and low online social network usage.

5. Method adopted for the study

Considering the objectives and hypotheses of the study the researcher has chosen survey method for obtaining primary data for the present study.

6. Tools used for the study

The data required for the study were collected through the following tools.

1. Questionnaire on usage of Online Social Networks developed by the researcher.
2. Social Competence Scale (Punitha and Lathika, 2010)

7. Statistical techniques used

The different statistical techniques used in this study were mean, standard deviation, t test and ANOVA.

8. Data analysis

8.1 Identification of users and non users of online social networks.

In order to identify the users and non users of online social networks a questionnaire on usage of online social networks was administered to 1000 higher secondary school students from 10 schools of Ernakulam, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala state. Among them 714 students were users of online social networks and 286 were non users. That means 71.4% of higher secondary school students were members of online social networks and 28.6% of students were not members of online social networks.

8.2 Level of usage of online social networks among students at higher secondary level

The maximum score was 123 and minimum score was 50. The mean and standard deviation calculated were 80.29 and 15.79 respectively. Using this mean and standard deviation students were classified into three categories. From the calculation it is obtained that 122 students (17.09%) students have high usage of online social networks, 467 students (65.41%) have moderate usage of online social networks and 125 students (17.51%) students have low usage of online social networks.

8.3 Level of social competence among students at higher secondary level

In order to find out the level of social competence a social competence scale was administered to 1000 higher secondary school students. The maximum score obtained was 182 and minimum score was 93. The mean and standard deviation calculated were 131.93 and 13.19 respectively. Using this mean and SD students were classified into three categories. On calculating in this way it is obtained that 148 students (14.8%) possess high social competence, 708 students (70.8%) possess moderate social competence and 144 students (14.4%) possess low social competence.

8.4 Comparison of social competence of users and non users of online social networks.

Test of significance of difference between means is employed to find significant difference between Social competence of users and non users. The details of the test are given in table 8.1

Table 8.1 Data and result of the test of significance of mean difference in the social competence of users and no users of online social networks

Subsamples	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	level of significance
Users	714	129.35	12.57	998	10.25	p <.01
Non users	286	138.34	12.55			

From table 8.1 it can be seen that the obtained t value 10.25 is significant at .01 level since it is greater than the corresponding table value 2.58 for degrees of freedom 998. Thus it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the social competence of users and non users of online social networks. The mean values shown in the table indicate that non users have high social competence.

8.5 Comparison of social competence of students having high, average and low online social networks usage.

To find out whether there is any significant difference in the social competence of students at higher secondary level having high, average and low online social network usage, the researcher employed ANOVA. The details of the test are given in table 8.2

Table 8.2 Result of ANOVA of the social competence of students at Higher Secondary level having high, average and low online social network usage.

Between groups		Within groups					level of significance
Level of usage	no. of students	sum of squares	mean square variance	df	sum of squares	mean square variance	
High	125						
Average	467	6854.79	3427.39	2	105596.57	148.52	711 23.07 P<.01
Low	122						

From the table 8.2 the obtained F value (23.07) is greater than the table value (4.60) at .01 level of significance. Hence we reject the null hypothesis which means there is significant difference in the social competence of students at higher secondary level having high, average and low online social network usage

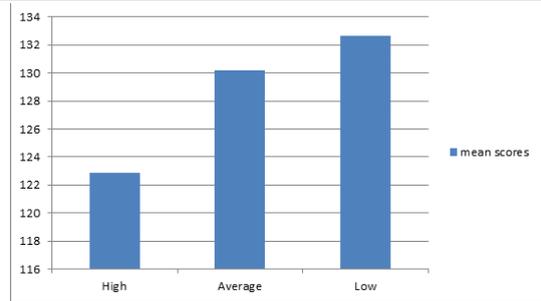


Figure 1: Comparison of social competence of students having high, average and low online social network usage

From the figure it is observed that there is significant difference in the social competence of students having high, average and low online social network usage. Also it can be observed that the students having high online social network usage have less social competence when compared to other two groups.

9. Findings and conclusion

The following were the findings of the study:

1. Most of the students at higher secondary level are users of social networking sites and only a minority are non users
2. Majority of students at higher secondary level have moderate usage of online social networks. The students having high usage and low usage are a few in numbers.
3. Majority of students at higher secondary level possess moderate social competence. The students having high and low social competence are a few in numbers.
4. There is significant difference in the social competence of users and non users of online social networks. The mean values indicate that non users have high social competence when compared to users.
5. There is significant difference in the social competence of students having high, average and low online social network usage. Also the students having high social network usage have less social competence when compared to students having average and low social network usage.

Hence it is important for the teachers and parents to have knowledge on their student's level of usage of Social Networking Sites. They should take special care to improve the social interaction of the students with real world and hence to improve social competence. They should encourage the students to actively participate in co curricular activities of the school. Also the interaction between teachers and students as well as between the parents and children should be improved.

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