Research Paper

Social Work

Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of Higher Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the influence of social media on higher secondary school students. The aim of the study is to analyse the influence of social media on the academic performance of the higher secondary school students. A descriptive study was conducted selecting 75 respondents by random sampling method from higher secondary schools in Kozhikode corporation, Kerala. Questionnaire was administered for data collection. Results of the study highlights that higher secondary students are well aware about all the social networking sites and have access to them. Findings indicate that despite the positive side of social networking sites they have an adverse effect upon academic performance of higher secondary students because their attention are much focused on chatting, posting photos and comments and updating status while their academic activities are neglected and left to suffer.

Introduction

Social networking websites are currently being used regularly by millions of people. The use of social networking sites has beenso widespread that they have caught the attention of academic and industry researchers worldwide. Social networking sites are now being investigated by numerous social science researchers and an increasing number of academic commentators are becoming more and more interested in studying Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking services, because of their probable impact on society. Most sites help strangers connect with others through shared personal interests, political and economic views, or simply recreational activities. Some sites accommodate distinct viewers, while others attract people based on similarities, such as common languages or shared racial, sexual, religious or nationality-based identities. Nonetheless, social networking sites have only one common goal. It is to encourage new ways to communicate and share information.

Social Networking Sites

The idea of "Social Networking" has existed for several decades as a way forpeople to communicate in society and build relationships with others. With the increase of technology used for communicating with others and the popularity of the Internet, "Social Networking" has become an activity that is done primarily on the Internet,with sites like MySpace, Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Friendster and Xanga (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). Social networking sites (SNS) may be defined as: Web-based services that allow individuals to, construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whomthey share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections andthose made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that there are over 200 different sites that are used for social networking (Duven&Timm, 2008). Most people who are members of these sites, such as Facebook (over 400 million users) and MySpace (over 100 million users) participate in them on a daily basis (Duven&Timm, 2008). Each person who becomes a member of a SNS has the opportunity to create his or her own webpage or "profile" which is supposed to be seen as a reflection of that person's personality. By using this personal profile, one can build an entire social network based on his or her own personal preferences (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).The idea behind most of this phenomenon, as with many websites, is to helppeople feel socially connected and part of a community (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). Participants may connect with other people they know through school, work, or an organization, or they may meet complete strangers from all over the world (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). Social status is also a very important part of SNSs because it plays a role inhow each individual is viewed on their profile by others. Adolescents and college-aged individuals are especially interested in having a lot of friends, because many worry what others will think if they do not have as many friends as their peers.

Adolescents and the Internet

Internet has become the tool used for almost every project or paper that a student will write in high school. In recent studies, adolescents have shown to be the greatest consumers of the Internet, particularly for social interactions (Lin &Subrahmanyam, 2007). Social networking sites as well as email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals have completely changed the way that adolescents interact and gather information (Raacke&Raacke,2008).Adolescents have become accustomed to this lifestyle much more than older generations have in recent years.

Teenagers now use the Internet for the majority of their daily activities and informationgathering, as opposed to older generations who used resources like the television ornewspaper. Social networking sites have also been in the centre of concern for many parents because of safety concerns and/or risks. The risks and dangers of teen internet usage are constantly flooding television shows, newscasts, and magazines, always warning parents to educate parents on teen Internet behaviours.

Academics and Social Networking

The current generation of teens lives in a fast-paced technological world with many different types of communication happening all at the same time. For example, he or she may be on the computer on an SNS, while also talking on the phone, sending instant messages to a friend, and emailing someone else all at the same time. While there may be some advantages to this, such as the teen learning how to type faster and multi-task many things at once, there may also be a breakdown in much of that communication.

Social networking sites, as well as other new forms of communicationtechnology, are also a concern to many school professionals because of the level ofdistraction they create within the school.Eventhough many schools have created many strict rules that forbid the use of handheldtechnology during school or that block certain social networking websites, manyado-

lescents are still able to connect during school hours as they please (Greenfield &Subrahmanyam, 2008). This has caused distractions during instruction time and has had a negative impact on the learning environment.

Internet and social networking sites can havea positive influence on adolescents. Socialnetworking sites provide an outlet for teens to express themselves in their own unique ways. In addition, they serve both as a meeting place for teens to interact with other like-minded people and as showplaces for a teen's artistic and musical abilities (Boyd, 2007). Finally, high school students use these sites as tools to obtain information and resources for graduation preparation and future planning. For example, students applying for college visit profiles of that college's students to view pictures and read blogs of past students to determine whether the college would be a good fit (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In the past five years, much research has been done on the emotional consequences of social networking site participation, but not much has been studied on the academic outcomes. Thus it is significant to assess the influence of social media   on the academic performance of students.

Research Methodology

The main objective of the research isto study the influence of social media on the academic performance of the higher secondary school students.A descriptive study was conducted selecting 75 higher secondary students by random sampling method from higher secondary schools in Kozhikode corporation, Kerala. A pretested questionnaire was administered for data collection and data were analyzed by using percentages and proposition.

Results and Discussion

The study shows that all the respondents are aware of the social networking sites. 48 per cent of the respondents often visit online sites, while 32 percent of the students very often make online visits.

Table 1: Time spent on Social Networking Sites (SNS) per day by Respondents

Sl No	Duration	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than 2 hours	9	12.0
2	2 hours	15	20.0
3	3 hours	36	48.0
4	More than 3 hours	15	20.0
Total		75	100.0

Table 1 indicates the duration of time spent by the respondents overSocial Networking Sites (SNS). The study highlights that majority (68%) of the respondents are active on SNS for 3 hours or more a day.

The studyhighlights the number of devices owned by the respondents through which they access SNS. 46.2 per cent of the responses show that the respondents own mobile phone, 42.3per cent own computerand 11.5per centown tab through which they use social media. This shows that the children are acquainted with the technology and have access to various devices.Majority of the respondents i.e. 80.0per cent are using SNS with the help of mobile phones.

Table 2: Social Networking sites used by Respondents

Sl No	Sites	Frequency	Percentage
1	Facebook	69	92.0
2	Whatsapp	48	64.0
3	Youtube	42	56.0
4	Google talk	24	32.0
5	Blog	15	20.0
6	Twitter	9	12.0

N=75

Thetable 2above indicatesthat majority of the respondents use facebook and whatsapp.Most of the respondents use social media for chattingand entertainmentpurposes.

A good number of respondents (92%) are having more friends through SNS than in real life.

Result of the study shows that majority (60%) of the respondents are negatively influencedby the usage of various social networking siteson their academic performance. The negative influence of SNS on academic performance of higher secondary school students may be because their attention gets focused on chatting, posting photos and comments, updating status, downloading music etc.This indeed becomes a reason for academic activities to suffer in oneway or the other. Similar findings have been arrived at by Greenfield &Subrahmanyam (2008).

Majority (64%) of the respondents have made an average performance in the unit examination. And 20 per cent of them have made below average performance whereas 8 per cent of the respondents have scored above average and another 8 per cent of the higher secondary school students who are the frequent users of SNS have failed in examination. Most of the respondents believe that use of social media can have an adverse effect upon their academic performance.

Table 3: Influence of SNS on Study Timings

Sl No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Always	44	58.7
2	Sometimes	21	28.0
3	Never	10	13.3
Total		100	100.0

Table 3 shows that the use of SNS affects the study timings of the respondents. They expressed that SNS are helpful in accomplishing their assignments and is an effective tool for e learning.At the same time their study timings are being affected since majority of the respondents are active on SNS for 3 hours or more a day (shown in Table 1).

Conclusion

The present study reveals that higher secondary students are well aware of all the social networking sites and have access to them. Findings also indicate that despite the positive side of social networking sites, they have a negative influence upon students because their attention is much focused on chatting, posting photos and comments, updating status etc while their academic activities are neglected and left to suffer.

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