International Journal For Advanced Research In Science & Technology
A peer reviewed international journal
www.ijarst.in
ISSN: 2457-0362

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSE: A CASE STUDY

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Introduction

Social media is now a very popular and powerful new form of social communication among the present generation. It is an open platform for free and unrestricted conversation between millions of people worldwide without any borders. Social media will refer to any online platform that allows users to link to each other and contribute, share content and comments. It intends to facilitate sharing, collaboration, transparency and conversation.

Key words

Social Media, Twitter, Whatsapp, Online, Web

Definition

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defines "Social Media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content, captures the key terminology involved.". Oxford English Dictionary defined social media as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking". In simple terms, it can be called as a popular social instrument of communication. This new form of media makes the transfer of text, photos, audio, video, and information in general increasingly fluid among internet users. The Social Media includes Facebook, Twitter, Blogs YouTube, Flickr, WhatsApp etc., which are considered as very powerful communication tools.

Social media provides a venue for the people to share their activities with friends, subject experts research scholars and colleagues or to share their interest in a particular topic. Students create an online profile with biographical data, photos and any other information they choose to post and interact wit subject experts, researchers etc. They communicate with each other by making their latest though public in a blog-like format or via e-mail, instant messaging, voice or videoconferencing to select members. What began for personal use migrated to educational purpose and social media sites to find the information to prepare the assignments to share their ideas and develop their knowledge. The prese study aims to examine the use of Social Media among the students and how it helps in their education purpose. Understanding how students are using Social Media tools outside the conventional classroom mainly to support learning and teaching.

Objectives of the Study

a) to investigate the use of social media by the students;

b) to find out the frequency and the times spent on the use of the social media;

c)to know how far the social media is useful to student for academic purpose; and

d)to find out the purpose for which social media is used by the student teachers;

e) to determine to what extent social media sites are helpful in student academic activities.

Methodology

The present study is based on the survey conducted with UG, PG students of Regional Library, S.V. Agricultural College, Tirupati. A well structured questionnaire was prepared according to the objectives of study. The simple random sampling method was used to select the sample of the study. The questionnaires were personally handed over to 180 student teachers by the researchers for data collection and 165 filled in questionnaires were received back from students. The data were tabulated and analysed in accordance with the objectives of this study. The scope of the present study is confined to the use of social media sites by the students of both UG and PG students of S.V. Ag Regional Library.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Gender wise distribution of respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	67	40.6
Female	98	59.4
Total	165	100

The table 1 shows the gender wise distribution of questionaries to the student, participated in the study. Out of 165 respondents, 98 (59.4%) are female and 67(40.6%) are male students.

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Use of different social media Tools by the Repositors

Table 2 Use of Social Media Tools

Sl. No.	Social Media Tools	Use of social media	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Face book	148	89.7
2	Twitter	28	16.9
3	Blog	14	8.4
4	Linkedin	12	7.3
5	You Tube	88	53.3
6	Pinterest	20	12.1
7	Google +	69	41.8
8	WhatsApp	152	92.1
9	My Space	6	3.6
10	Tumblr	0	0
11	IM(Instant Messaging)	13	7.8
12	Wikis	40	24.2
13	Flickr	9	5.4
14	Google Docs	16	9.7
15	Research Gate	18	10.9
16	Slide Share	36	21.8
17	Delicious	6	3.6
18	Reddit	8	4.8
19	Library Thing	17	10.3
20	Goodreads	15	9.1
21	Others	11	6.6

The table 2 reveals the use of different social media tools by the students. The analysis of data shows that 92.1% of students are using WhatsApp regularly, 89.7% are using Facebook, 16.9% Twitter, and 53.3% students are using YouTube on regular basis, no body has awareness about Tumblr.

Frequency of use social media

Table 3

Sl.No.	**Frequency**	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
1	Very Frequently	28	17
2	Frequently	81	49
3	Occasionally	36	22
4	Rarely	16	9.6
5	Very Rarely	4	2.4
	Total	**165**	100

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The table 3 represents the frequency in the use of social media by the students. Majority of the respondents (49%) are frequently using social media sites and 22% are using occasionally, 17% using very frequently, 9.6% rarely and 2.4% are using very rarely.

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Time spent for the use of social media

Table 4

Sl.No.	Time Spent on Social Media Sites	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Every day	31	18.8
2	Less than 30 minutes	42	25.5
3	30 minutes to 1 hour	51	30.9
4	1 to 2 hour	24	14.5
5	More than 2 hours	17	10.3
	total	165	100

The table 4 reflects the time spent on the use of social media by the students and out of 165 respondents 30.9% spend half an hour to 1 hour, 14.5% spend 1 to 2 hour a day and 10.3% respondents spend more than 2 hours in a day.

The usefulness of social media for the Academic purpose

Table 5 Usefulness of social media for the Academic purpose

Extent of Agreement	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	6	3.6
Disagree	4	2.4
Neither agree nor disagree	8	4.8
Agree	124	75.2
Strongly agree	23	14
Total	165	100

The table 5 describes the student's degree of agreement for the usefulness of social media for the academic purpose. It reveals that 75.2% of respondents agree, 14% strongly agree, 4.8% neither agree nor disagree and only 3.6% strongly disagree and 2.4% of respondents disagree.

Table 6 Utilization of social media for Academic purpose

Sl.No.	Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	To find useful information/resources	154	93.3
2	Online learning	86	52.1
3	To develop reading/writing skills on the web	52	31.5
4	Virtual meeting with classmate and friends	91	55.2
5	To share information, photos, videos with friends	109	66.1
6	To interact with subject experts and faculty members	36	21.8
7	To prepare Assignments and Projects	148	89.6
8	To update Information and Knowledge	104	63.0
9	To share Academic Information and Sources	67	40.6
10	To share and exchange Teaching Learning Materials Notes, Lesson plans, Slides etc.)	84	50.9
1	Tagging related resources	34	20.6
12	To conduct research activity	30	18.2
13	Others	03	1.8

The table 6 reveals the use of social media sites for academic purpose by the students. Majority of the respondents (93.3%) use social media to find useful information/resources and 89.6%, to prepare assignments, 66.1% to share information, photos, videos with friends. 63.0%

to update information and knowledge, 52.1% for online learning and 55.2% for virtual meeting with classmates and friends.

Major findings of the study

- 49% of students frequently using the social Media
- 92.1% of students are frequently using social media tools and most popular social media tools are WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube.
- 30.9% students were spending 30 minutes to 1 hour per day for social media.
- 75.2% of the students Agree that the social media is very much useful for academic purpose.
- 93.3% of students using the social media for the purpose to find useful information resources.
- 18.2% are using the social media for conduct the research activity.

Conclusion

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool to disseminate the information in digital era and plays important role in the academic activities of the students. It is an open platform to share their innovative ideas and information. This study reveals that majority of the students agree that the social media is very much useful in pursuing their academic activities and using social media for educational purpose. The main purpose of the use of social media by the students is to find useful information and resources, to dare information, to update knowledge, online learning and to interact with classmates, subject experts, friends and other related academic activities. The study also indicates that the students are spending more time in using social media and need to balance the relationship between social media for personal use and academic activities.

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